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Disorienting Encounters

Re-reading Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Ottoman Miniature Paintings.

Desoriënterende Ontmoetingen Een herlezing van zeventiende- en achttiende-eeuwse Ottomaanse miniaturen

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES I

INTRODUCTION 1

MINIATURE HISTORY 6
MINIATURES AS THEORETICAL OBJECTS 11
DISORIENTING ENCOUNTERS 15
FROM THE DETAIL TO THE THRESHOLD: THE CONTENTS OF THIS STUDY 17

CHAPTER 1: READING IN DETAIL: ADAM AND EVE IN CLOSE-UP 23

WHAT IS A DETAIL AND WHERE DOES ONE FIND IT? 25
MAKING UP STORIES: IN AND OUT OF THE IMAGE 30
ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS 37
PREFIGURING THE MINIATURE 40
FALLING UPSIDE DOWN 44
THE NEW EVE 52

CHAPTER 2: THE INTIMATE LOOK: SEEING, TOUCHING, AND GAZING AT THE FEMALE BODY 59

THE FALL FROM THE BOOK: THE WOMAN IN THE HAMAM 61
THE RETURN OF THE EVERYDAY: PUTTING THE WOMAN IN THE PICTURE 66
THE SULTAN'S SOUVENIR 71
FROM THE ORIENTALIST GAZE … 73
… TO THE INTIMATE LOOK 79
NAKED INTIMACY 84
REDEFINING THE INTIMATE 91

CHAPTER 3: DOUBLE ENCOUNTERS: THE CIRCUMCISION PARADE IN INTERVALS 99

VISUALIZING AN IMPERIAL FESTIVAL 102
THE SULTAN'S PROCESSION IN TWO TAKES 109
THE STILL 121
THE OUT-OF-FIELD: EXPANDING SPACE AND TIME 127
THE INTERVAL: PUTTING THE STILLS IN MOTION 133
THE IMPERIAL VISION 140
ENACTING THE LOOP 144

CHAPTER 4: PORTRAIT OF A SULTAN: ORNAMENTATION AT WORK 149

SULTAN AHMED III ENTHRONED 153
PARERGON: ORNAMENTED SURFACES 157

OF OTHER SPACES 164
TRAPPED ON THE SURFACE 169
THE TRUTH OF THE PORTRAIT 172
THE AURATIC SHIELD 181

CHAPTER 5: THE MINIATURE, THE HORIZONTAL, AND THE SYMPTOM 187

OPENING THE BOOK 188
THE MINIATURE AND THE TABLEAU 194
DOES SIZE REALLY MATTER? 197
LOOKING AT THE BOOK 201
THE HORIZONTAL IMAGE 203
HORIZONTAL VIEWING 207
PREGNANT TO "A NEXUS OF NEW TEMPORALITIES" 210
WHAT IS BEING HANDED TO TIMUR, OR THE SYMPTOM 217

CHAPTER 6: LOOKING THROUGH METAPHORS: FROM THE WINDOW TOWARD THE THRESHOLD 221

IN GAZANFER AĞA'S SCHOOL 223
THE WINDOW EFFECT 228
THE THRESHOLD 235
THE FRAME AS A THRESHOLD 240
THRESHOLDING THE VISUAL 244
DWELLING AT THE THRESHOLD 254

EPILOGUE *OR* THE AFTERLIFE 257

BIBLIOGRAPHY 263

SUMMARY 283

SAMENVATTING 289

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. "THE STABLEMAN" HÜMÂYUNNÂME, UNDATED, ARTIST UNKNOWN, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (R. 843, F. 136B). 3

FIGURE 2. DETAIL, "THE STABLEMAN." 4

FIGURE 3. "EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE," FALNAME, ARTIST UNKNOWN, 1614–16, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (H. 1703, F. 7B). 31

FIGURE 4. "EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE," *HADIQAT AL SU'ADA'*, ARTIST UNKNOWN, SEVENTEETH CENTURY, TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM, (1967, F.8A). 43

FIGURE 5. "EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE," *HADIQAT AL SU'ADA'*, ARTIST UNKNOWN, SEVENTEETH CENTURY, BRITISH LIBRARY, (OR. 12009, F. 7V). 43

FIGURE 6. DETAIL, "ADAM AND EVE." 46

FIGURE 7. DETAIL, "ADAM AND EVE." 47

FIGURE 8. .DETAIL, "ADAM AND EVE." 49

FIGURE 9. DETAIL, "ADAM AND EVE." 51

FIGURE 10. *WOMAN BATHING IN THE HAMAM*, ABDULLAH BUHARÎ, 1741-2, SINGLE-LEAF MINIATURE, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (H.Y.Y. 1043). 63

FIGURE 11.THE ADDRESS BOOK 71

FIGURE 12. THE END OF THE PROCESSION OF THE SULTAN, SÛRNAME-I VEHBI, LEVNÎ, 1727/8- 1732, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (A. 3593, F. 16A-15B). 112-113

FIGURE 13. THE MIDDLE OF THE PROCESSION OF THE SULTAN, SÛRNAME-I VEHBI, LEVNÎ, 1727/8-1732, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (A. 3593, F. 15A -14B). 114-115

FIGURE 14. THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESSION OF THE SULTAN, SÛRNAME-I VEHBI, LEVNÎ, 1727/8-1732, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (A. 3593, F. 14A-13B). 116-117

FIGURE 15. "THE PROCESSION." 119

FIGURE 16. DETAIL, *SÛRNAME-I VEHBI*, (F. 15B-15A). 126

FIGURE 17. DETAIL, *SÛRNAME-I VEHBI*, (F. 16A). 132

FIGURE 18 AND FIGURE 19. THE MINIATURE IN THE MIRROR, *WAITING FOR HEAVEN*. 145

FIGURE 20. THE CONVOY IN THE MIRRORS, *WAITING FOR HEAVEN*. 146

FIGURE 21. THE PORTRAIT OF SULTAN AHMED III, *KEBIR MUSAVVER SILSILENÂME*, LEVNÎ, CA. 1720, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (A. 3109, F. 22V). 154

FIGURE 22. SULTAN SELIM I (GRIM), *KEBIR MUSAVVER SILSILENÂME*, F. 9B. 155

FIGURE 23. SULTAN SÜLEYMAN I (MAGNIFICENT), *KEBIR MUSAVVER SILSILENÂME*, F. 10A. 155

FIGURE 24. DETAIL, SULTAN AHMED III, GENEALOGICAL TREE, ARTISTS UNKNOWN, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, OIL ON CANVAS, GRIPSHOLM CASTLE (GRH 227), SWEDEN. 164

FIGURE 25. SNAPSHOT FROM THE EXHIBITION "LALE DEVRINE IKI ÖZGÜN BAKıS: LEVNÎ & VANMOUR." 175

FIGURE 26. SULTAN AHMED III, JEAN BAPTISTE VANMOUR, 1703, OIL ON CANVAS, RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, 33.5X26.5. 177

FIGURE 27. "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN," *RAWDAT AL-SAFA*, ARTIST UNKNOWN, 1599-1600, BRITISH LIBRARY, (OR. 5736; F. 232B). 190

FIGURE 28. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 193

FIGURE 29. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 213

FIGURE 30. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 214

FIGURE 31. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 215

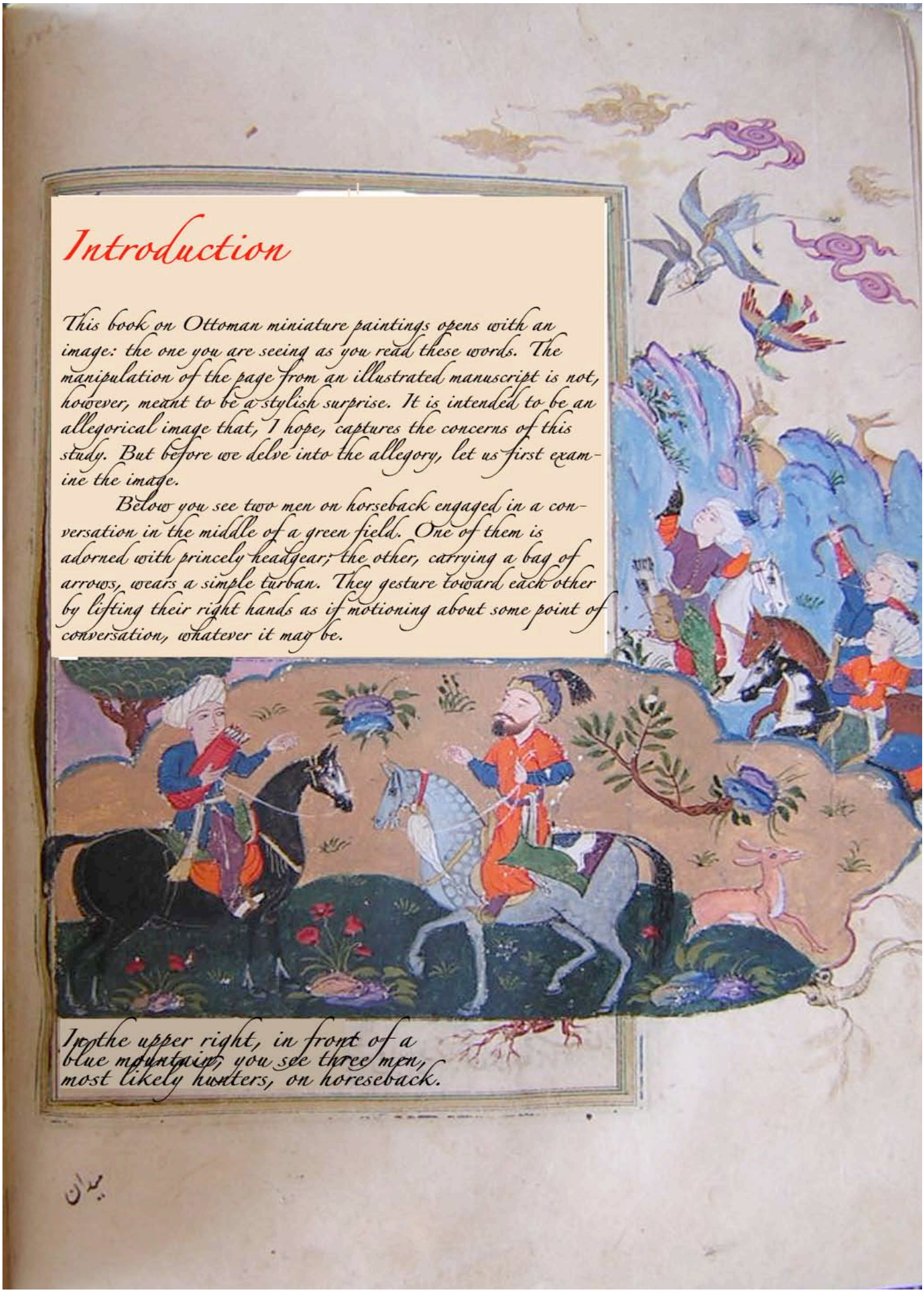
FIGURE 32 AND FIGURE 33. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 216

FIGURE 34. DETAIL, "TIMUR ON HIS EXPEDITION TO ATTACK SULTAN HUSAYN." 218

FIGURE 35. "GAZANFER AĞA MEDRESESI," *DIVAN-I NADIRI*, AHMED NAKŞI, C.1620, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (H. 899, F. 22A). 225

FIGURE 36. "THE STORY OF DANIEL," ARTISTS UNKNOWN, LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, THE NETHERLANDS, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (H. 2148, F. 13 B). 228

FIGURE 37. "THE HOUSE OF SHEYKH ÜL-ISLÂM MUSTAFA EFENDI," *DIVAN-I NADIRI*, AHMED NAKŞI, C.1620, TOPKAPI MUSEUM, (H. 899, F. 18B). 237



Introduction

This book on Ottoman miniature paintings opens with an image: the one you are seeing as you read these words. The manipulation of the page from an illustrated manuscript is not, however, meant to be a stylish surprise. It is intended to be an allegorical image that, I hope, captures the concerns of this study. But before we delve into the allegory, let us first examine the image.

Below you see two men on horseback engaged in a conversation in the middle of a green field. One of them is adorned with princely headgear; the other, carrying a bag of arrows, wears a simple turban. They gesture toward each other by lifting their right hands as if motioning about some point of conversation, whatever it may be.

In the upper right, in front of a blue mountain, you see three men, most likely hunters, on horseback.

The man on the left points at the birds in the sky. He wears a special glove, a black one, of the sort used by keepers of wild birds. The man in the middle is about to shoot an arrow. The other hunter hangs onto the bridle of his horse with one hand while with the other he seems to make a gesture that remains obscure to us.

Above the hill, in the sky, the birds go at each other in a spirited fray. Two appear to be fighting. Another, colorful bird carries something in his beak. Two gazelles watch the scene in the air behind the mountain. A few clouds, two of them painted in purple, hang in the sky—or on the empty page.[1]

This miniature visualizes the "Stableman" story. It recounts the tale of a king who decides to go hunting with his retinue. Having suspicions that his brother might kill him, the king asks the stableman to spy on the prince. The stableman agrees, but soon enough he reveals his mission to the prince. When the king dies and is succeeded by the prince, the stableman is condemned to death. When asked the reasons for his verdict, the new king explains that the stableman cannot be trusted, as he had given away the previous king's secrets.

The miniature depicts the king talking with his stableman while his other retainers hunt in the far distance. The artist's placing of the figures outside the picture plane, on the margins of the page emphasizes the space between the conversing pair and the others. People familiar with the Ottoman literature of the era, or those who had been exposed to the tale through extratextual means, would recognize the story upon seeing certain pictorial elements and gestures—the hunting scene, the animated gestures between the figure wearing regal headgear and a man who looks like his servant, and so on. Other details, such as the gazelles, the black

[1] This miniature is taken from *Hümâyunnâme,* an Ottoman translation of the *Panchatantra* or *Kalila and Dimna*—a collection of animal fables in verse and prose written originally in Sanskrit. The copy from which the miniature is taken from is undated, yet scholars attribute the book to the end of the sixteenth century. It contains 87 miniatures executed by numerous unknown artists. Each of these miniatures are placed around the handwritten script written by an unknown scribe. Like the other miniatures in the *Hümâyunnâme,* the miniature in question, in its original form, contains the script in the textboxes, where I have inserted my own text. The text can be lossely translated as: Upper section: "In the old times lived an almighty king whose reign was valued as just and his country was filled with light by his sword of politics: *He had built a just terrain/ made his time profusely joyful*. One day, he decided to go hunting and headed to the direction where there were a lot of birds. Upon his arrival the place was filled with birds of various kinds and wild animals. His retinue went away to hunt and the king was left alone with his servant." Lower section: "He said to his stableman 'let us stroll around a little…" I am grateful to Hatice Aynur from Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, for the transcription of the Ottoman (Arabic) text into Turkish.

glove worn by one figure, and the colorful bird in the sky, are not mentioned in the text but are nevertheless present in the image. They add up to the visual narrative and govern the ways we read the image.

Figure 1. "The Stableman" Hümâyunnâme, undated, artist unknown, Topkapi Museum, (R. 843, f. 136b), 7.3 x 20 x 16.2 cm.

This study is concerned with instances when images "surprise" their viewers, thus requiring a demanding process of viewing. They generate moments of bewilderment, which encourage the viewer to think along with the image and initiate an interpretive process that brings about, rather than the "truth" of the image, a performance of the encounter.

If the viewer is willing to go beyond the mere identification of textual elements, the *Stableman* miniature provides this sort of "surprising" experience. What, for example, is the iconographic meaning of the root that is sticking out of the ground right beneath the hooves of the king's horse, below the image, into the text? Resolutely, it has none. The text makes no mention of roots—it has no need to, as the story aims to make an unremarkable statement about the virtues of trustworthiness and fidelity. According to the representational coordinates of the miniature, the roots appear to penetrate into the subterranean realm. However, there

is no pictorial element of the "earth"—such as a tree—that might help us to explain the roots' presence. The roots make up an ambiguous figure reaching into the underground as that which is always there but nevertheless remains invisible to the viewer.

However, if the miniature is considered in its inevitable relation to the handwritten text, the figure of the roots might initiate an interpretive game that opens up a new array of theoretical inquiries concerning one of the oldest, most persistent issues pertaining to representation: the relation between word and image.[2] As Mieke Bal notes, "[t]he very phrase 'word and image' suggests that two different, perhaps incompatible things are to be shackled together," emphasizing "the difference, not the common aspects between the two" (1991: 27). The binding of the pictorial and the textual is perhaps nowhere more tangible than in illustrated manuscripts in which the two realms are inextricably linked and display their inevitable mutual dependence.

The page from the *Hümâyunnâme* brings together the word and the image in a way that invites the viewer to continually translate the realm of the visual into the verbal, and vice versa. This mutual empowerment resonates with W.J.T. Mitchell's "polemical claim" that "all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no 'purely' visual or verbal arts, though the impulse to purify media is one of the central utopian gestures of modernism" (1994: 5). "The Stableman" image, on the contrary, fashions a premodern gesture promoting a composite, synthetic work that combines image and text as an instance of what Mitchell calls an "imagetext" (1994).

Figure 2. Detail, "The Stableman."

[2] As I do not wish to present a full analysis of the miniature here, I will not give an in-depth discussion of the issues pertaining to the relationship between word and image here.

The root, as the only pictorial element that literally intervenes in the realm strictly reserved for the textual, is a metaphor for how the encounter between the two can be envisioned in visual terms (Figure 2). It points out that the visual is anchored in and fed from the verbal as if it were the ground itself. The textual, on the other hand, is never pure; rather, it is always already tainted by the visual that slips into its realm. In this capacity, the encounter between the root, which reaches out to the textual, and the letter *Alif*, which seems to shy away from the intruding not-fully-developed weak tips of the root, "pictures theory."[3] By means of this detail, the image comes to theorize the ways in which the visible and the readable interact—as if to illustrate this passage from Mitchell's *Picture Theory* (1991):

> If the relation of the visible and the readable is (as Foucault thought) an infinite one, that is, if "word and image" is simply the unsatisfactory name for an unstable dialectic that constantly shifts its location in representational practices, breaking both pictorial and discursive frames and undermining the assumptions that underwrite the separation of the verbal and visual disciplines, then theoretical pictures may be mainly useful as de-disciplinary exercises. (83)

The figure of the root, then, can be a starting point for a critical reading of the miniature as a "self-aware image," to borrow the title of Victor Stoichita's 1997 book, commenting upon itself and on the concerns of painting by inviting its viewer to question what pertains to the visual and the verbal. This brief reading of "the Stableman" miniature exemplifies the ways in which miniature paintings operate as "theoretical objects," rather than historical documents that reflect the aesthetic concerns and artistic tastes of the cultural era within which they were produced.

Let me return to the allegorical function of the "photoshopped" version of the page from the *Hümâyunnâme* mentioned at the outset. I replaced the original script with my own text not only to make a clever introductory gambit but also to demonstrate what miniatures can *do* beyond their conventional illustrative function. I

[3] In *Picture Theory* (1994) Mitchell develops the notion of metapicture—"a piece of movable cultural apparatus, one which may serve a marginal role as illustrative device or a central role as a kind of summary image," what he calls a hypericon, referring to that which "encapsulates an entire episteme, a theory of knowledge" (49). "In their strongest forms," hypericons "don't merely serve as illustrations to theory; they picture theory" (49).

consider this altered picture to be an allegorical image embodying the logic of this study. Each miniature discussed in this book is anchored in my text; their roots creep into my writing and ways of thinking about visuality and visual representation. In this sense, the miniatures do not simply illustrate my words—this is never the case. Rather, my words are informed, tainted, and sometimes misguided by the miniatures' imagery, which, in the first place, lured me into writing this study.

Miniature History

This book centers on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman miniature paintings found mostly in illustrated manuscripts. Miniature painting—or *taswir* and *nakish*, as the Ottomans called it—was the dominant form of Ottoman pictorial art until the eigthteenth century. It developed together with medieval Islamic book illustration—alongside illumination (*tezhip*), calligraphy (*hat*), paper marbling (*ebru*), and bookbinding (*cilt*). Manuscript production formed an integral part of Ottoman institutional activities. Miniatures were produced mostly in the imperial studio (*Nakkashane*) founded in the mid-fifteenth century under the patronage of Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1481). It was an art of the court commissioned, largely, by Ottoman sultans and powerful courtiers.

The imperial studio was responsible for creating a unique style, designed by the head masters, such as Nakkash Osman, Matrakçi Nasuh, and Nigari from the sixteenth century; Nakkash Hasan, Ahmed Nakşî, and Musavvir Hüseyin Istanbulî from the seventeenth century; and Levnî and Abdullah Buharî from the eighteenth century. The preparation of an illuminated manuscript engaged various craftsmen—the author, the calligrapher, the gilder, the illuminator, the margin-drawer, the illuminator of intricate floral ornamentation, the marbled-paper maker, the painter, the master binder, and the artist who ornamented the bindings with lacquer work.[4] That the miniatures were not signed until the eighteenth century alludes to the collective nature of their production.

According to Günsel Renda, the representational modes of miniature painting were formed by artists who "imbued with the abstract worldview of Islam, reflecting

[4] These craftsmen were united in guilds, each having a patron saint. Each craftsman had to obey the rules that governed the guilds.

a conception of painting based in primary colors, emphasized contours, and a preference for decorative surfaces and two-dimensional depiction omitting light and shade" (1995: 16). This conceptual approach to figural representation was handed down to the Ottomans from Persian and Timurid schools (particularly those developed in Shiraz, Tabriz, and Herat) as well as from Chinese and Byzantine painting—even if the latter influence is rarely mentioned. The Ottomans conceived miniature painting as an art in the service of the Empire and therefore regularly commissioned works depicting the daily events and activities related to the palace circles.[5] This approach obliged the miniaturists to "develop ways of representing incidents and persons realistically" while "adhering to the formalist representational mode of Islamic miniatures" (Renda, 1995: 20). In this sense, Ottoman miniature painting differs from its artistic counterparts such as those flourishing in the Safavid (Persian) and Mughal schools, which have poetic styles.

Illustrated books fall into classifications including history, cartography, urban topography, science (cosmology, geography, astronomy, pharmacology, botany, alchemy, and physics), (sultanic) portraiture, literature, and religion (with the exception, of course, of representations of the Koran). The formative period (ca. 1451-1520) of Ottoman miniature painting was heavily influenced by the examples of Western schools brought by Venetian artists—such as Gentile Bellini and Costanzo de Ferrara—who were invited to Constantinople by Mehmed the Conqueror. Simultaneously, local artists were grappling with Persian, Timurid, and Chinese masterpieces so as to find a unique Ottoman visual voice. [6] Going forward, the sixteenth century, which has been considered the "golden age" of Ottoman miniature painting, was the period in which the imperial visual language was institutionalized, especially in the works of Nakkash Osman, which tended not to use the effects of Italianate painting introduced in the previous century and created a more "Eastern" style of expression.

[5] Such events included the sultans' enthronement, their audiences with ambassadors, and their departures for military campaigns, as well as battle scenes and images of daily life including royal hunting scenes and festivities held in the sultan's presence.

[6] The issue of periodization remains a problem, as one cannot trace a linear progressive development of the practice. Atasoy and Çağman (1971) suggest a periodization, mostly following the reigning sultans: "The Early Period: Mehmet II (1451-1481)," "The Period of Establishment: Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-66)," "The Classical Period: Selim II (1566-74) and Murat II (1574-95)," "The Late Classical Period: Mehmet III (1595-1603)," "The Seventeenth Century," and "The Eighteenth Century."

This study looks at the so-called "declining period" of miniature painting, namely the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My decision to focus on that period in particular is due to the fact that miniatures of the seventeenth century have received less scholarly attention because very few examples, especially from the second half of the century, have survived. According to Atasoy and Çağman, the second half of the century is, in fact, "the most obscure period in Ottoman miniature painting" (1974: 71).[7] Another reason why I have decided to study the period has to do with certain shifts in the production of miniatures. The few illustrated books remaining from the epoch demonstrate that the imperial language of the sixteenth century began to give way to less established ways of representation.

The first modification can be observed in the amount of works collected in *murakka*s —albums in which numerous miniatures from different periods and styles were assembled. Even though some single-page miniatures had been produced in the previous periods, only in the seventeenth century did such miniatures generate a genre in its own terms. Second, the lessening of the material and textual constraints of the book allowed miniaturists to experiment with new subjects, most notably the everyday scenes that had not previously been possible under the thematic reign of the book. In this period, the supremacy of the imperial studio was challenged by urban miniaturists—mostly located in Istanbul—who, not restricted by imperial constraints, worked in a distinct style and took up new subject matter. At the same time, new schools of miniature painting, such as those in Aleppo and Baghdad, sprang up in the provinces. These schools, though marginal and short-lived, managed to bring about a new idiom, marked by a flexible use of the page and the frame and a wider color scheme.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, Ottoman miniature painting underwent distinct transformations as the Empire opened up to the West for the first time. During this period, known as the beginning of Westernization, the Ottomans showed themselves to be intensely interested in European art and architecture, epitomized in

[7] According to the authors, the sultans reigning in the period from 1648 to around 1703 were located in the palace in Edirne. Therefore, "the palace in Istanbul had lost its previous importance and consequently the Istanbul palace studio was no longer encouraged" (71). Subsequently, the miniaturists moved to the Edirne palace, which already had a long-established studio. The illustrated works made and kept at the Edirne Palace were probably lost during the many disasters and enemy occupations that later befell the city, perhaps in 1878, when the palace was blown up by the Russians (71).

the so-called Ottoman Rococo, even as they themselves became objects of desire for Europeans, as seen, for instance, in the writings of Mary Wortley Montagu and paintings by Jan Baptiste Vanmour. The cultural encounter with the West had inevitable effects on Ottoman arts. Accordingly, contemporary art historians have focused on the ways in which European techniques of representation (such as modeling, illusionism, perspective, and shading) have been incorporated into traditional Ottoman arts, most notably in miniature painting.

In these inquiries, considerable attention has been given to the oeuvre of Levnî, who by and large revised traditional miniature painting by experimenting with new expressive forms (see, Atil, 1999, 1993; Tansuğ, 1993; Irepoğlu, 1999). Working in the so-called Europeanized style, Levnî's contemporary Abdullah Buharî created single-page miniature paintings that depicted scenes from everyday life and made paintings of costumes and flowers as well as landscapes frescos that become popular in the second half of the century. Among the last examples of book illustration are *Hubanname* and *Zananname* by Fazil Enderunî and *Hamse-i Atayî* by Nevizâde Atayî, completed in the last quarter of the century. Several illustrated copies of these works demonstrate that traditional methods in miniature painting—such as mixing pigment with gum arabic and employing non-overlapping layers of paint—have been replaced by new techniques adopted from the West—such as the use of watercolor, which allowed for subtle gradations of light and shade. By the end of the century, miniature painting was gradually supplanted by new media such as murals (landscapes) and oil-on-canvas painting (sultanic portraits).

To study the visual production of the period under consideration, I have selected three miniatures from each century. These works are representative of the material and conceptual shifts brought about by Westernization. The corpus I have drawn together—from early-seventeenth-century work to that of the mid-eighteenth century—covers a wide span of existing trends, styles, and genres. In this way, this study considers various levels of style, genre, geography, material, and illustrative function. It largely concentrates on works executed in the imperial atelier (Chapter 2, 3, 4, and 6). Yet I also include a miniature in the provincial style of the seventeenth-century Baghdad school (Chapter 5), as well as a work by an independent local painter, most probably from Istanbul (Chapter 1). The miniatures encompass diverse genres, encompassing the historical (Chapter 3 and 5), the literary (Chapter 6), the religious (Chapter 1), portraiture (Chapter 4), and the nude (Chapter 2). Three of the

miniatures were part of illustrated manuscripts (Chapter 3, 5, and 6), two were conceived as single-page miniatures that were bound in a codex later on (Chapter 1 and 4), and one was executed as an independent miniature (Chapter 2).[8]

Most of the extant illustrated manuscripts from the Ottoman period are now preserved in the Library of the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. Other museums and libraries in Istanbul (such as the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum and the Süleymaniye Library) also house rare manuscripts. In addition, Ottoman miniatures can be found in museums, private collections, and libraries around the world, most notably the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and British Library in London. All these manuscripts are kept in special sections in these museums and, with few exceptions, they have no public visibility except when they are displayed in special glass vitrines for specific exhibitions. In this sense, the contemporary viewer's encounter with miniatures is not only historically but also physically mediated.[9]

Michael Camille, one of the most stimulating art historians writing about Medieval European art, suggests that when manuscripts are exhibited, the viewer "can only peer through the glass at one opening." This means that one has to "relinquish the crucial dynamic of the turning page, and usually ha[s] access to only one frame from a complex cumulative experience of seeing and reading" (1984: 509). For this reason, the viewer can never encounter the miniatures in the ways they had once been experienced. For Camille, this discrepancy presents a challenge that must be overcome. He suggests that "[u]nlike the largely defunct visual orders of icon, altarpiece and, some would even say, easel painting, we still all utilize and learn to deal with this form of communication in the ways that our ancestors did" (509).

This study, however, starts from the impossibility (and ineffectuality) of reenacting such an authentic encounter with miniatures. Instead, it proposes to revisit the tradition in order to investigate and complicate ways in which we look at images

[8] I have not included cartographic and scientific miniatures because both have resolutely illustrative and descriptive functions. I have also left out the vast collection of illustrated manuscripts known as costume books produced by local painters for European travelers. Even though they are noteworthy in terms of quantity I consider them to be mass-produced souvenirs. However, in the second chapter, I discuss a nude miniature painting produced in the imperial atelier that appropriates the style and the content of miniatures found in costume albums.

[9] Miniatures are also reproduced in museum catalogues and scholarly publications, on souvenirs of different kinds as well as on websites.

today.

Miniatures as Theoretical Objects

I am aware that it may not be obvious why I am undertaking this research on Ottoman miniature paintings in the interdisciplinary field of cultural analysis rather than the more established discipline of art history. After all, the corpus with which I am engaging is historical, and has so far been researched under the rubric of art history even though it has remained a marginal realm of inquiry there. Until now, the scholarly works on Ottoman miniature paintings have concentrated on conventional issues pertaining to patronage, attribution, and periodization, as well as the formal, stylistic, and iconographic analysis of miniatures.

These works are of course valuable—especially for making the corpus available for further study. My research diverts from previous art-historical inquiries through claiming the contemporary cultural agency of miniature paintings. Rather than conceiving miniatures as historical products of an era to which only the diligent researcher has access, this approach is grounded in one of the main tenets of cultural analysis, namely that it must be, in the words of Mieke Bal, "based on a keen awareness of the critic's situatedness in the present, the social and cultural present from which we look, and look back, at the objects that are always, already of the past, objects that we take to define our present culture" (1999: 1). Therefore, for Bal, the practice of cultural analysis is not indifferent to history; on the contrary, it foregrounds "the active presence of the object, or text, in the same historical space as is inhibited by the subject, 'me'" (12). Following Bal, I have built my analyses on the principle that one should not reify a historical state but rather must look at the present situation as a starting point to understand historical objects. This standpoint, based on a clear commitment to contemporariness, considers miniatures in their relevance for the present.

Certainly, such an approach entails and privileges anachronism, regarding it not as a shortcoming in dealing with historical images but as an enabling condition for research. This allows us, following Georges Didi-Huberman, to account for the richness of images that combine different temporalities—the moment of their production as well as the moment when we look at them. Didi-Huberman suggests,

in line with Walter Benjamin, that in every historical object "all times meet" (2000: 91). Therefore, the history of images is one of "objects that are temporally impure, complex, overdetermined. It is therefore a history of polychronistic, heterochronistic, or anachronistic objects" (2003: 42).

To consider images as a montage of different temporalities is to acknowledge that historical images exert their agency in the present. This impure understanding of history encourages the analyst to reflect on the potentially productive dialogue between historical images and those theories and concepts pertaining to what images *do*, today—in other words, to visuality, as we have come to call it in the past decade. In my point of view, miniature paintings are not merely historical artifacts but rather theoretical objects, which in their historical specificity engender "general, transhistorical, and philosophical questions" (van Alphen, 2005: xiv-xv).

As outlined by the French art historian and philosopher Hubert Damisch, the notion of the "theoretical object" advances the potential of works of art to transform the way we think about art—formulated in the axiom "art thinks."[10] According to Damisch, a theoretical object

> [o]bliges you to do theory but also furnishes you with the means of doing it. Thus, if you agree to accept it on theoretical terms, it will produce effects around itself. [… I]t forces us to ask ourselves what theory is. It is posed in theoretical terms; it produces theory; and it necessitates a reflection on theory. (Bois et. al, 1988: 8)

Therefore, Damisch's approach does not consider artworks as mere manifestations of a culture or historical period or as the reflection of the creator's intentions.[11] For him,

[10] Damisch mentions the formula toward the end of his *The Origin of Perspective* (1987), in which he discusses perspective as a paradigm. He suggests that the early-modern paintings he examined make visible and comprehensible how painting not only shows but thinks. He argues that "the formal apparatus put in place by the perspective paradigm is equivalent to that of the sentence, in that it assigns the subject a place within a previously established network that gives its meaning, while at the same time opening up the possibility of something like a statement in painting" (200: 446). I follow Bal's (1999) and van Alphen's (2005) take on Damisch's axiom that extends the limits of his understanding to those artworks that articulate thought about art.

[11] This does not mean that historical context is irrelevant. He comments on the relation between theory and history: "But I never pronounce the word theory without also saying the word history. Which is to say that for me such an object is always a theoretico-historical object. Yet if theory is produced within history, history can never completely cover theory. That is fundamental for me. The two terms go together but in the sense in which each escapes the other" (Bois et. al, 1988: 8).

as van Alphen summarizes it, art is a form of thinking that compels the viewer to start a "dialogue with it by articulating questions of a more general—for instance, philosophical, political, or social—nature" in which the artwork becomes a *historical* articulation of a general, more fundamental problem (2005: 4).

Theoretical objects, however, are not simply phenomena to be observed; rather, they are actively constructed by the analyst in her close encounter with the cultural object. Miniature paintings as theoretical objects pose questions that go beyond the concerns of the eras of their production and in so doing offer us modes of thinking about art and visuality. Thereby, my analyses were informed—but not directed—by material and intellectual conditions affecting the production of miniatures. I have deliberately left out contemporaneous philosophical and religious documents that might "explain" the aesthetic concerns of Ottoman miniatures.

In the introduction to her insightful book *Beauty and Islam* (2001), Valérie Gonzalez explains that historical sources, such as Islamic ones, "alone cannot supply the necessary methodology for dealing with complicated aesthetic problems," which "therefore means that one has to use tools which do not belong *a fortiori* to the cultural area under observation" (3). Whereas Gonzalez mounts a phenomenological inquiry to understand the peculiarities of Islamic art and architecture, my study maintains an interdisciplinary "concept-based methodology" (Bal, 2002: 5). Here I employ concepts as tools for a critical and situated analysis of the miniatures. They are the third partner in the otherwise "totally unverifiable and symbiotic interaction between the critic and object," as Bal writes (23).

However, the partnership does not entail the imposition of the theoretical concept on the cultural object so as to "apply" the concept. In his introduction to the *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Brian Massumi reflects on the shortcomings of "application":

> The first rule of thumb if you want to invent or reinvent concepts is: don't apply them. If you apply a concept or system of connection between concepts, it is the material you apply it to that undergoes change, much more markedly than do the concepts. The change is imposed upon the material by the concepts' systematicity, and constitutes a becoming homologous of the

> material to the system [….] It has less to do with "more to the world" than "more of the same." It has less to do with invention than mastery and control. (Massumi, 2002, 17)

In line with this caution against application, the practice of cultural analysis does not so much seek to master, predict, or explain the object by way of concepts—rather, it aims to specify, analyze, and get an eye for differences of the object and the concepts we work with. Such theoretical practice, to follow Bal's maxim, "helps us to understand the object better *on its*—the object's—*own terms*" (2002: 8).

The object's own terms can be grasped by adopting the technique of close reading as an active negotiation and confrontation with the cultural object. The literary method of close reading certainly undergoes a significant change when one deals with images. In visual analysis, close reading's attention to detail is taken to a level of productive obsession—particularly with those details that somehow fall out of the representational "logic" of the image and by so doing do not conform to a swift process of interpretation (of, for example, the figure of the root in the *Stableman* image). Such details not only enable a novel interpretation of the object but also encourage the analyst to revisit her theoretical framework.

In *Reading in Detail* (1987), Naomi Schor warns us that a detailed reading does not bring about the truth of an image or a text. Rather, it shows that the "truth value of the detail is anything but assured" (7). Accordingly, she proposes that the detail, as a guarantor of meaning, is "constantly threatened by falsification and misprision" (7). Keeping Schor's observations in mind, I realize that my analyses of the miniatures that saturate even the tiniest details with meaning are under constant threat of overinterpretation. These small elements do alter the overt, overall meaning so as to inscribe something that did not seem to be there. Rather than seeing overinterpretation as a negative attribute of analysis I contend, with Jonathan Culler, that "interpretation needs no defence; it is with us always" and that, "like most intellectual activities," it is "interesting only when it is extreme" (1992:110). Indeed my study demonstrates how overinterpretation as a method can "let the object speak back," to use a methodological figure Bal advances. Hence the aim of my book is to develop a novel mode of reading that allows the miniatures to look back at us and disorient our encounters.

Disorienting Encounters

The metaphor of the object speaking back has evident anthropomorphic undertones to it. Another notion, namely the encounter, which I use throughout this study—as well as in my title—also inevitably advances a not-so-hidden anthropomorphic agenda. As I conceptualize it, the notion of the encounter describes simply what happens when the viewer starts reading an image. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the term refers to "[a] meeting face to face; a meeting (of adversaries or opposing forces) in conflict; hence, a battle, skirmish, duel."[12] This definition underlines a few of the reasons why I chose to employ the term, "encounter." First, it emphasizes that looking does not happen at once—as in an *Augenblick*—but rather is a process ("a meeting"), an event that takes place in a historically and culturally specific situation. In this capacity, the encounter with an image cannot be anticipated in advance but is instead performed as an event in which both sides are active participants. Second, it underscores the reciprocity between the seeing subject and object seen that is involved in the process ("face to face"). In Bal's terms, this understanding amounts to the "empowerment of the object" (2002: 10), in which the object "from subject matter becomes subject, participating in the construction of theoretical views" (1999b: 13). Finally, the notion of the encounter refers to the potential of conflict that is always already inherent to "intersubjective" relations ("skirmish," "duel"). Yet the conflict between the viewer and image does not entail closure; rather, as I have persistently argued so far, it provides an opening whose outcome is thought.

The term "encounter"has been advanced in this sense by philosopher Gilles Deleuze. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze suggests that " [s]omething in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*" (1994: 139, my emphasis). [13] Departing from Deleuze's statement, Simon O'Sullivan defines encounter's relation to recognition as follows:

[12] Throughout this book I consulted the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) at *www.oed.com.*

[13] In *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze,* an eight-hour series of interviews between Deleuze and Claire Parnet aired on Arte Channel in 1994 and 1995, Deleuze states that "he believes in encounters (*rencontres*), but these encounters don't occur with people. People think that it's with other people that encounters take place, like among intellectuals at colloquia. Encounters occur, rather, with things, with a painting, a piece of music. With people, however, these meetings are not at all encounters; these kind of encounters are usually so disappointing, catastrophic. On Saturday or Sunday, when he

> An object of an encounter is fundamentally different from an object of recognition. With the latter our knowledges, beliefs, and values are reconfirmed […] an object of recognition is then precisely a *representation* of something always already in place. With such a non-encounter our habitual way of being and acting [….] is reaffirmed and reinforced, and as a consequence no thought takes place. With a genuine encounter […] our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disturbed. We are forced to thought. (2006: 1)

The encounter, according to O'Sullivan, operates as a rupture, producing a crack in our habitual ways of thinking. The rupture, however, contains "a moment of affirmation" of "a new way of seeing and thinking" (1). It is a creative rupture that encourages us to think otherwise. Following O'Sullivan, this study deems miniature paintings partners of different encounters that force us to think about the ways in which images affect us.

The encounter, understood in this way, involves an underlying characteristic of disorientation, another notion I would like to touch upon briefly. Disorientation might, intially, have negative connotations. The *OED* entry defines it as "[t]he condition of having lost one's bearings; uncertainty as to direction." It also refers to a "confused mental state, often due to disease, in which appreciation of one's spatial position, personal identity, and relations, or of the passage of time, is disturbed." Certainly an academic study on miniature paintings should not aim to drag its readers into such a state.

To clarify, then, I employ the term disorientation in a sense that has been particularly inspired by Inge Boer's *Disorienting Vision* (2004). Boer's book shows how a detailed rereading of French Orientalist texts and images can dislocate stereotypes about the Orient. Even though my objects are decisively different than Boer's, my approach has a similar agenda of destabilizing stereotypical approaches to the manifold cultural encounters between East and West. Without refuting the claim that the "East" and the "West" are historical discursive constructions, this

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goes out, he isn't certain to have an encounter; he just goes out, on the lookout for encounters, to see if there might be encounter material, in a film, in a painting." The summary of these series of interviews can be found at *http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABC1.html*

study shows that miniature painting, as the most authentic artistic form of the Ottomans, has always been a hybrid site where different notions of representation have been negotiated. As I argue in the fourth chapter, the genre of Ottoman sultanic portraiture has developed through a dialogue between the traditions of Timurid and Venetian portraiture. In this sense, the visual idiom of Ottoman miniature painting should be understood as a site of cross-cultural encounters that entails a "deviation from the eastward position" (*OED*).

Disorienting Encounters indeed aims to disturb the reader's appreciation of her spatial position and of the passage of time by maintaining that historical images are objects of encounter that can teach us how to think, speak, and write about art here and now.

From the Detail to the Threshold: The Contents of This Study

Rather than imposing one overarching theoretical argument that would allegedly explain the truth of the miniatures, my study engages with each of them them in their specificity by addressing different theoretical issues concerning visuality and visual representation that the encounter with them generates. In so doing, I aim to not only to make the practice of miniature painting resonate with contemporary theory but also to critically assess the concepts through which we understand what a work of art does. This study's objects, then, are both miniature paintings and those theories and concepts we work with to understand what visuality is and does.

The book consists of chapters that each focus on one miniature in its singularity. Every chapter is organized around a central theoretical problem raised by each miniature that I bring to light by engaging with a set of concepts to bear on the miniature. The selection of concepts is deliberately eclectic, as I do not strictly follow either a body of disciplinary literature or a theoretical body of work but engage with the ways in which my objects make statements about issues pertaining to visuality. As such, each chapter should be seen as an essay founded on an argumentative structure triggered by the encounter with the miniature. Moreover, the chapters take along the unresolved issues of preceding ones. In this way, they collectively bring about not only a novel methodological approach to the study of miniature painting but also a coherent theoretical work.

The first chapter explores the narrative function of the pictorial detail in our reading of images. Does it not only inquire into the ways in which words and images interact but also sketches out my methodological stance throughout this study. I wish to demonstrate how a viewer's detailed, performative reading can alter the conventional and official interpretations of images. To address the issues pertaining to reading, I examine a seventeenth-century miniature painting that visualizes a story that is universally known (at least in the West, and further afield as well): the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. Conventionally, an informed iconographic analysis suffices to make a "correct" assessment of pictorial elements in the miniature by relating them to different literary sources (in this case the Koran and other religious sources). As I will demonstrate, certain iconographically dysfunctional details that do not easily fit in the pre-textual framing of the miniature open up a process of narrative reading, which privileges the detail as a site of meaning on its own.

Reading the *Fall of Adam and Eve* miniature through details that have no apparent iconographic meaning not only empowers the image as a new text that reiterates the founding myth but also asserts the dynamic status of such myths. Moreover, and more importantly, it allows us a way to read for the victim (Eve) and offers an alternative story that is as acceptable as the standard interpretation, even if one insists on remaining within the context of theology. In so doing, in the first chapter I demonstrate that images are not merely prefigured by official texts but also, and above all, *post*-performed by the viewer, a premise developed in the following chapters.

In the following chapter, I advance my take on the process of reading in greater detail by engaging with the notions of rereading (Roland Barthes) and palimpsestic looking (Boer's reworking of Barthes' notion of rereading). This time, I deal with conventional modes of viewing and visual discourses invoked by images and imposed on them by their viewers. I look at an eighteenth-century single-page nude miniature entitled *Woman bathing in the Hamam* by the court artist Abdullah Buharî. This miniature, a unique occurence in the scarcely existing genre of the nude, appropriates the style and content of so-called bazaar miniatures, produced by local miniaturists working outside of the imperial atelier, which drew on Orientalist images from costume albums produced by European artists. Negotiating with the Orientalist gaze handed down to it from these albums as well as local bazaar

miniatures, the miniature encourages us to ponder the conventional ways of addressing a nude that have been formulated in binary oppositions such as gazing and glancing, or returning/subverting the gaze.

The mode of viewing proposed by *Woman bathing in the Hamam* involves a performance of what I call an "intimate encounter," a process of rereading that produces a new text that can serve as an alternative to the distanced, voyeuristic, and almost rapist reading enabled and indeed encouraged by the Orientalist imagery. The miniature fosters a spatial, embodied, haptic, and erotic intimacy that plays on the boundaries between knowing and not-knowing the other's body. As such, the miniature, while proposing an intimate look as a mode of engagement, simultaneously prompts us to reconsider the concept of intimacy. Ultimately, by constructing two diverse understanding of the intimate advanced by Gérard Wajcman and Hamid Dabashi, I argue that the miniature promotes an instance of intersubjective intimacy in which the image looks back at and touches the viewer.

Chapter 3 takes the reader on a rather adventurous journey. I look at the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* by Master Levnî, the only Ottoman illustrated manuscript with a historical subject from the eighteenth century. It gives, in 137 single-page miniatures, a day-to-day visual and verbal account of the fifteen-day circumcision festival of Sultan Ahmed III's sons held in 1720. By presenting the festive occasions as events taking place in the here and now of the viewer the miniatures perform a sort of visual storytelling.

To address the ways in which the miniatures of the *Sûrname* visually perform an event, I provide a close reading of a set of miniatures that depict the procession of Sultan Ahmed III consisting of three sets of double-page miniatures spread over three folios. I propose that the use of individual miniature panels arranged in a sequential order has an anachronistic cinematic touch to it because the technique underlines a problem of representing an *event*—a problem that extends into the treatment of time and space within motion. My comparison between the two visibly incompatible media does not rely on a forced analogy but on an understanding of the "critical loop" between media—a concept inspired by the writings of the Soviet cinematographer Sergei Eisenstein—through which the *problematic tradition of representation* that has been handed down to the figurative arts over time can be "put in image." This interpretative method allows me to address issues concerning representation in the miniature series through engaging a chain of cinematic concepts

such as the notions of the still developed by Roland Barthes (1977) and the out-of-field articulated by Gilles Deleuze (1993a, b) and Jacques Aumont (1997) among others, as well as the notions of montage and the interval. This montage of concepts allows me to mediate on the ways in which the procession miniatures produce an idea of event-ness in effect and affect in the service of constructing an imperial visuality.

In the following chapter, I trace the production of the imperial visuality further by focusing on one of the most established genres in Ottoman painting, namely, portraiture. The portrait of Sultan Ahmed III by Levnî is an exceptional miniature in sultanic portraiture since its ornamentation, taken to the level of *horror vacui*, nearly overwhelms the main subject—the figure of the sultan. In this sense, the miniature problematizes not so much the core issues of referentiality and likeness but the very function of imperial portraiture. To delineate what this portrait does to its viewer, I first assert that the ornamental, in its various associations with the arts of Islam, is a site of meaning, a constructive supplement, or a *parergon* that constructs a resolutely flat and opaque pictorial space. Additionally, the ornamentation provides the miniature with an "auratic" shield, a notion Walter Benjamin advanced (1969a, 6; 1930), distancing the viewer from the image seen and simultaneously screening her gaze from access to the sultan's inner qualities, a characteristic that has been considered to be among the finest traits of a "successful" portrait.

My question here is how the miniature is successful as a portrait of *the sultan*. It does not represent an individual—Ahmed III—but presents the sultan, conceptually, as an image. The viewer is not provided with *a* sultan, but is shown the meaning of sultan-ness. The miniature does not "intend" to be a portrait in the conventional sense but rather seeks to be an idea or an event that affects its viewer precisely by keeping her outside, at a distance. This view concords with Gülru Necipoğlu's argument that the Ottoman sultan differs from his contemporaries by an irreconcilable invisibility that is epitomized by the architectural structure of the Topkapi Palace (2000). In this sense, the miniature portrait reinforces the sultan's power to not be seen, or to be seen only as a silhouette that cannot be imbued with individuality.

In the fifth chapter, I dwell on material aspects of miniatures. Here I engage with physical and conceptual features of their primary medium, the book. A miniature depicting the campaign of King Timur (a.k.a. Tamerlane) against Sultan

Husayn taken from the seventeenth-century book *Rawdat al-Safa*, directs me to focus on the scale, dimension, and physical orientation of miniatures as conditioned by their placement in books so as to disentangle their implications for the process of reading. The directionality of reading proposed by the Timur miniature, which is analogous to that of reading a book, brings about a problem concerning the orientation of the viewing process. The mode of reading encouraged by the miniature is significantly different from the viewing trajectory promoted by the tableau and wall painting, which follows the vertical orientation of the human body. Following critiques of verticality offered by Walter Benjamin (1928), Leo Steinberg (1972), and Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois (1997), as well as their arguments concerning the horizontal image in modernism, I argue that the miniature suggests a total horizontalization of the viewing process that affects the viewer's body as much as her intellect.

Additionally, the image combines the experience of horizontalization with a process of miniaturization, which, according to Gaston Bachelard (1958), Susan Stewart (2001), and Ralph Rugoff (1997), has a subversive potential that affects our physical and intellectual encounter with objects. In the Timur miniature, at the juncture of miniaturization and horizontalization, an invisible "object," a detail in the center, takes over the image. This invisible detail offers a narrative reading by operating as a device for what has been conceptualized as a "pregnant moment"—a moment that opens up to a future-to-come that cannot be incorporated within the miniature. Moreover, it functions as a symptom, as Georges Didi-Huberman (2005) called it, indicating a passage to "another state of painting."

In the final chapter, I scrutinize this other state of painting. I introduce the concept of the threshold, which I propose as an alternative to one of the "founding" metaphors of visual theory, namely the window. The miniature entitled "The Theological School of Gazanfer Ağa," executed by Ahmed Nakşi in the *Divan-i Nadiri*, is one of the seventeenth-century miniatures in which the artists seems to be dealing with representational techniques—such as the illusion of depth—foreign to the idiom of traditional miniature painting. Scholars have proposed that this miniature should be seen as a negotiation with—and not an imitation of—the notion of painting as a window.

Accordingly, I trace the logic of the tableau-window, as Wajcman called it, and suggest that it is an "epistemological metaphor" that produces the knowledge of

its object and the conditions under which it becomes knowable. The trope achieves these ends by juxtaposing the discourses of the frame and of transparency, both of which are burdened with the baggage of the window-object. The "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature enters into a complex negotiation with both discourses. I propose to understand this encounter through another architectural metaphor, namely, the threshold. The miniature frame, instead of offering up the painting as immediate readable object, as suggested by the discourses of the frame and of transparency, encourages a liminal experience of looking that is caught between different modes of representation: looking, reading, and sensing. Moreover, the viewer's acts of looking are "thresholded" by means of horizontal layering of the pictorial plane tainting the encounter with opacity rather than imbuing it with transparency. In this sense, the miniature as a threshold prompts a process of looking that constantly questions the status of the frame as well as the instantaneous visibility and readability of the image being seen. As I will show, in so doing it provides an alternative visual epistemology by encouraging the analyst to dwell in a way of knowing that is transitional, relational, opaque, and precarious, rather than being in the state of certainty, transparency, and unconditioned visibility that is epitomized by the window metaphor.

I conclude this book by tracing the "afterlife" of miniature painting in the realm of practice so as to underscore reverberations of my study in a wider realm. Contrary to the common conviction that Ottoman miniature painting ceased to exist by the end of the eighteenth century, as it had lost its original function and context, I propose that its aesthetic concerns survived and can be found in the "cracks" of modernity. Inspired by Bal's notion of "preposterous history," I discuss the ways in which two contemporary works, namely Orhan Pamuk's novel *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (My Name is Red, 1998/2001) and Derviş Zaim's film *Cenneti Beklerken* (Waiting for Heaven, 2006), engage with the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting and develop a novel literary and cinematographic language conditioned by their encounter with miniatures. These works, I feel, not only reverberate with the concerns of my study in the field of artistic practice but also open up a further realm of theoretical inquiry.

CHAPTER 1: Reading in Detail: Adam and Eve in Close-up

> […] it is idle to revive old myths if we are unable to celebrate them and use them to constitute a social system, a temporal system [….] Let us imagine that it is possible.
>
> – Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, 81.

I begin with a seventeenth-century miniature painting that visualizes a story which is universally known (at least in the West, and further afield as well): the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. In this chapter, I dwell on the narrative function of the pictorial detail in our reading of images. In this way, I not only advance my inquiry on the relationship between words and images I hinted at in my introduction but also sketch out my methodological stance throughout this study.

Naomi Schor states that we "live in an age when the detail enjoys a rare prominence" (1987: 3). However, for art historians pictorial details have long been significant evidences—at least since Giovanni Morelli developed the method of paintings' connoisseurship that involved concentration on small details, such as the depiction of earlobes and fingernails. In this model, "marginal and irrelevant details [....] provide the key to a deeper reality, inaccessible by other methods" (Ginzburg, 1988: 87).[14] While the correct attribution of paintings is a crucial matter that brings about "the truth of painting," another approach, namely iconographic analysis as developed by Erwin Panofsky, regards pictorial details as residues of meaning if not the truth of a painting.

The Adam and Eve miniature incorporates details—nakedness, tree leaves covering the figures' genitals, and a snake—that enable the viewer to recognize the story, one that is deeply embedded in cultural memory not only through the Abrahamic accounts but through its countless representations in visual art, literature, and popular culture. An iconographic analysis of the miniature would facilitate the viewer to identify certain pictorial elements, such as the halo and the sheaf of wheat, as distinct cultural motifs by referring to the themes and concepts transmitted through pre-existing sources.

[14] In "Clues: Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes" (1988), Carlo Ginzburg compares Holmes' hermeneutic approach and Freud's psychoanalytic strategies with that of the "Morelli Method." He points out that the underlying concern of the three methods is to read symptoms in a medical manner.

Such an informed reading prevents the viewer from reading the image "by herself" and enables her to make a "correct" assessment of the elements. In this sense, iconographic analysis relies on the principle of recognition.

In her *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word/Image Opposition* (1991), Mieke Bal advances a model for reading in detail that complements iconographic analysis. Narrative reading starts by examining a detail that the iconographic methodology, because it continually reads the visual in relation to the verbal by concentrating on the correspondence between the "written" pre-text and the image, cannot account for. Narrative reading, on the other hand, starts where iconographic analysis stops short and reads *into* the image to seek out the narrative structure. It concentrates on the ways in which visual elements tell a story.

Inspired by Bal's theoretical framework and Naomi Schor's and Roland Barthes's takes on the status and the operation of the detail, my analysis of "The Fall" miniature privileges pictorial details that may not fit into a certain reading of images performed within the paradigm of recognition on the basis of texts. This incongruity paves the way for a productive encounter between the viewer and the miniature because it invites the viewer to create her own story of the image, which may be in opposition to the story dictated by the pre-texts.

Instead of dismissing iconography out of hand in my reading of the Fall miniature, I dwell on canonical texts such as the Koran and the Bible as well as the interpretative texts, such as literary tales, that followed these canonical sources. Even though these texts provide us with an overall interpretative frame, they fail to explain certain intriguing details: the barren ground on which the figures stand, Eve's reluctant fingers, her missing belly button, and the difference in skin color between the couple. I suggest that such details, which seem to concur with the logic, linearity, and literality of the story, allow us to revive the myth by initiating a reading on behalf of the victimized (Eve). Reading for the detail alters the fundamental myth by bringing about an alternative version to that of "the first love story of our culture," which "has been most generally abused, presented as evidence that it was the woman who began it all, that hers is all the guilt"—which, in short, has been "widely adduced as a justification for misogyny" (Bal, 1987: 104). The new story deconstructs the "universal" story of disobedience and punishment; of withdrawal from home and living in exile; of the end of innocence and the beginning of sin, guilt, lament, regret, and shame. In particular, the new story presents

a “new Eve” who is different than the character whom patriarchal culture has cast as humankind’s first sinner.

My reading of the expulsion miniature for the operation of iconographically dysfunctional details turns the Fall myth upside down and offers an alternative story that is equally acceptable even if one insists on remaining within the context of theology. It demonstrates that images are not merely prefigured by official texts but also, and more importantly, *post*-performed by the viewer.

What Is a Detail and Where Does One Find It?

In *Reading in Detail* (1987), from which I take the main title of this chapter, Schor offers feminist close readings of canonical texts, ranging from the neo-classicist aesthetics of Sir Joshua Reynolds to Hegel’s romantic sublimation of detail in his *Aesthetik* and on through twentieth-century modernism, including Lukacs’ literary criticism, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Barthesian structuralism. In her readings, which assert “the claim of the detail’s aesthetic dignity and epistemological prestige”(7), Schor maintains the tension between the valorization and the denigration of the detail as the minute, the partial, and the marginal. She writes:

> To read in detail is, however tacitly, to invest the detail with truth-bearing function, and yet as *Reading in Detail* repeatedly shows, the truth value of the detail is anything but assured. As the guarantor of meaning, the detail is for that very reason constantly threatened by falsification and misprision. (7)

Here, Schor refers to the intrinsic paradox of the detail. The detail can be taken as the “guarantor of meaning,” or tacitly as the “bearer of truth,” yet it can never be exempt from falsification because of its marginal position, which fails to master a narrative. Oscillating between guaranteeing meaning and permanently falsifying it, the detail is marked by an ambivalence inextricably linked to the viewer/reader’s position as the producer of meaning.

While Schor’s textual details are tainted by ambivalence, visual details are even trickier. This is not only because of the semantic undecidability between the visual detail’s truth-value and the everlasting misprision that marks it with instability. The notion of detail is a comparative one. Something can only be

considered a detail in relation to or in comparison with something else. First, viewed under the rubric of a formal category, a detail might be relatively small-sized in comparison to other figures in an image. Or it could be barely discernible within the composition of an image—not because of its size, but because it is in the background or is outside the focal attraction-point on which the viewer is made to concentrate. In both cases, the detail is defined by its relation to the whole, to the predominance of the unified image either through its size or its compositional lack of integrity. In comparison to the whole, the detail remains somewhat insignificant because its uninviting smallness and compositional irrelevancy assures its almost total invisibility. By being hardly visible, the detail fails to attract the viewer's eye, hence it falls short in its participation in the production of meaning. This makes the detail semantically and semiotically ineffective. Even though the viewer "realizes" the detail's visual presence, she can easily disregard it as "visual filler" or as "noise" that is irrelevant to the logic of the actuality of the image. Therefore, the detail is doomed to inconsequentiality because of its parasitical status in relation to the wholeness of the image.

Second, the detail can be visible enough in terms of its size or compositional integrity, and yet the viewer can still pass over it without noticing it because of the image's semantic overload. This would once again leave the detail insignificant, and being such, it would only partially enter the fold of meaning. By "semantic overload," I refer to the detail's non-reflexive cultural codedness that hinders the viewer from seeing "clearly." Such a detail would be taken for granted and receive no further amplification; semantic overload would thus result in a sort of semantic neutrality of the detail. That is to say: in such a state, the image as a whole overrides the detail through the cultural code being employed to such an extent that the viewer no longer mediates the detail. In such a reading, a reverse synecdochal relation is constructed in which the general overrules the particularity of the detail.[15]

[15]In her discussion of Cindy Sherman's Still # 3 from the *Untitled Film Stills*, in which "a woman stands to the right, facing a sink with a dishrack, a bottle of Ivory dishwashing liquid, an almost-empty juice bottle, and an opened Morton's salt container," Kaja Silverman contends that "the mundane objects in her immediate vicinity [….] proclaim her [….] to be a '*Hausfrau*'" (1996: 210). Silverman suggests that these visual details, clearly visible to the viewer, precipitate the almost mechanical generation of stereotypical meaning in the viewer (223). Hence, the Ivory dishwashing liquid and the salt container perform their own semantic neutrality by partially attaching themselves to the meaning of the image through their non-reflective presence. In Silverman's argument, the realist code of reading the image–"this is a real woman in a kitchen surrounded by the expected ordinary kitchen objects"–reaffirms the insignificance of the detail by means of the viewer's compliance with the wholeness of the image that is seen through the hegemony of the cultural code.

Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida* (1981) struggles precisely with the tension between general narrative and productive detail involved in reading (in this case, reading photographs). In addressing this tension Barthes coins two terms: *studium* and *punctum*. The *studium* is "ultimately always coded" (1981: 52); it derives from culture and is a "contract arrived at between creators and consumers" (28). The concept refers to a range of meanings available and obvious to everyone; it is unary, that is, it is a unified and self-contained whole the meaning of which can be taken in at a glance. Through the *studium* the image is seen at once since "no detail [….] ever interrupts […] reading" (41). In such a reading the detail is condemned to absolute invisibility in favor of the general because of the viewer's familiarity with the cultural code. There are details; yet they are muted by their perfect alliance with what the viewer, culturally, is made to see. This is precisely the moment when semantic overload gives way to the semantic neutrality that draws the detail, once again, to insignificance and hence to invisibility.

However, the detail is not necessarily destined to insignificance. As Schor's account makes clear, the "truth value" of the detail is not given but assured. It is the viewer who fills the detail with meaning. Characterizing the viewer's attitude toward the image is the ability to see the image *through* the detail; she inhabits a subjective relation to the image that gives primacy to the detail. In a sense, the detail is "created" and "found" as well as neglected by the viewer rather than the creator of the image. Therefore, it is not the good god but rather the viewer who dwells in the detail.[16] Reading in detail suspends and reverses the marginal position of the detail, which would otherwise be submerged within the discourse of the general, of the whole, of the *studium*. Such a programmatic and tactical reading elevates the marginal to a position of centrality during the course of interpretation. In this kind of reading, an initially trivial element moves out of its insignificant position and takes up a central place in a manner that is "both initiated and inflected by its initial marginality" (Roelofs, 2003: 65). Such a transformation reorganizes the image at levels of form, affect, and narrative and inevitably pushes the meaning of the image in new directions that could not be given in advance, at a glance.

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[16]The famous art historian Aby Warburg was supposedly quoted as having said "Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail" (the good God dwells in the detail), yet I have never actually come across an exact source for the quote. There is also a variant version in which the devil occupies the place of the god. *The Random House Dictionary of Popular Proverbs and Sayings*, edited by Gregory Y. Titelman (New York: Random House, 1996) writes that the saying is generally attributed to Gustave Flaubert (1821-80), who is often quoted as saying "Le bon Dieu est dans le detail." Other attributions include Michelangelo and the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Barthes, who claims to possess an "antecedent (initial) taste for the detail, the fragment, the *rush*" (quoted in, Schor, 1987: 79), promotes a similar reading strategy by introducing the term *punctum*. Yet, as I understand it, reading in detail differs sharply from reading via Barthes' legendary *punctum*, defined as an off-center element in the image. *Punctum* is generally a detail that breaks the continuity and security of the *studium.* Unlike in the case of the latter, the rendering of *punctum* is highly personal; it varies from spectator to spectator, and its existence depends more on the observer than the creator. *Punctum* breaks the immobility and the given-ness of an image by "pricking," "wounding," and "stinging" the viewer. Yet it not only injures the viewer but also alters the viewed image by expanding across the image; it remains a detail even as "it fills the whole picture" (Barthes, 1981: 45). Through the detail's expansion involving its "mere presence," the viewer's reading is changed; perceiving now with "eyes with a higher value" (42), one looks at a new image.

Barthes insists that these eyes belong to "a primitive, a child—or a maniac" who dismisses "all knowledge, all culture." His eyes refuse "to inherit anything from another eye than [his] own" (51). This is why to declare a *punctum* is to give oneself up (43). Through the *punctum* the viewer interprets an image solely and absolutely from a personal point of view that strips the image of its historical and cultural specificity. Articulating the *punctum*, the viewer can only "see" the recollection of personal memories. At this point, *punctum* loses the critical potential that is enabled by the centrality of the detail and the viewer's active interpretation of it.

There are two limitations to Barthes' conceptualization of the *punctum* as a productive detail. First, his reading does not return to the image itself. The *punctum* pierces the viewer by bringing into play her personal memories, yet it never turns back to the image so as to resemanticize and re-narrativize what she has seen. Take, for example, Barthes' reading of James Van der Zee's *Family Portrait* of 1926. Barthes immediately declares that the *studium* is clear: "respectability, family life, conformism, Sunday best, an effort of social advancement in order to assume the White Man's attributes" (43). The *punctum* lies "in the belt worn low by the sister [....] whose arms [are] crossed behind her back like a school girl, and above all her *strapped pumps*" that arouse great sympathy in him, "almost a kind of tenderness" (43). No doubt, what Barthes sees through the *punctum* alters the way the image is understood. The relation between viewer and image has been transferred to one of affect, yet it remains exterior to the image. That is to say, instead of turning toward the image by means of seeing the *punctum*—which would have

enabled Barthes to re-narrativize the *studium*—Barthes insists on continuing to look with his "eyes with a higher value," adopting a viewing position that abstains not only from culture but also from critical inquiry into the way the image works. Such analysis promotes the prominence of the detail, yet it fails to recognize the possibility of the detail's power to re-narrativize the image and initiate a process that could evolve into an intersubjective analysis.[17]

Second, by describing the *punctum* solely through the filter of personal memory, the process of reading Barthes promotes comes to devour the images of the other. As Kaja Silverman rightly observes, Barthes's reading refutes alterity in favor of the primacy of *moi*, and—even though he pretends to eschew all culture—his reading eventually asserts the cultural prominence of his viewing position (1996: 184). Turning back to the *Family Portrait* later on, Barthes replaces the previous *punctum* with the necklace of the same woman and states "for (no doubt) it was the same necklace [....] which I had seen worn by someone in my own family, and which, once she died, remained shut up in a family box of old jewellery" (1981: 53). This reading uncritically assumes the (w)hite (m)an's attributes much like the immediate *studium*, which, according to Barthes, was "sympathetically interested, as a docile cultural subject" (43). Barthes' simple refusal of the cultural winds up a mere imposition of personal memory that is always already constructed by cultural circumstances. His cultural positioning is eventually veiled by the introduction of the "personal."

Therefore, such reading obstructs a productive cross-cultural viewing that could have been opened up by a detailed reading because the detail has the power to alter the dominant cultural meaning of the image ensured by what Barthes called the *studium.* If the *studium* is a result of the contract between the creator and the consumer of the image that appropriates culturally transmitted "myths" (28), Barthes's detail hardly ever questions these myths. As Roelofs hints in a short footnote, the examples of the *studium* with which Barthes contrasts the *punctum* "frequently apply to photographs that Barthes seems to experience as culturally distant" (2003: 84, n.24).[18] What he sees in the *studium*

[17] For this reason, the reader of *Camera Lucida* is not allowed to see the famous quintessential winter garden photograph in which he captures his mother as she really was. Barthes' mother as a child will remain absent for the reader—not because the "truth" of the image is not an objective fact to be collectively understood, but because of Barthes' insistence that the primacy of his personal memories eschews the cultural framework that assures that an image is *seen collectively*.

[18] Illustrative in this regard are the analyses of a photograph by William Klein that "teaches" Barthes "how Russians dress" (30), and two images of Nicaragua in 1979 that express "the banality of a rebellion in Nicaragua" (23) and the "dignity and horror of rebellion" that bore "no mark or sign"

is the myth of the "white man" that appropriates the images of the other at a glance as a docile cultural subject. Even so, when Barthes endows these images with a *punctum*, his reading still reproduces the myth of the sovereign "white man" who is blind to cultural difference. The necklace of the black woman, for example, breaks the *studium* only by asserting a personal affiliation of the *same*.

In what follows, I will offer a narrative reading in and for detail, motivated by Mieke Bal's take on the operation of the visual detail, as an alternative to Barthes' *punctum* / *studium* dichotomy. Contrary to Barthes' *punctum*, I will argue that the detail and reading in detail gain their critical power from within the image and within the cultural framework out of which the image is seen. I will suggest that such an analysis can challenge the hegemony of the *same* by engaging with the image's otherness.

Making Up Stories: In and Out of the Image

In this chapter I analyze a miniature painting representing the all but universally known myth of the Fall, which has been articulated in the books of the Abrahamic religions (Figure 3). The story of Adam and Eve is told in the Book of Genesis in chapters 2 and 3, with some additional elements being given in chapters 4 and 5. In the Koran the story is evoked in fragments in different *surah*s: *al-Baqara* (2: 30-39), *al-Araf* (7: 11-25), *al-Hijr* (15: 26-44), *al-Isra* (17: 61-65), *Ta-Ha* (20: 115-124), and *Sad* (38: 71-85).[19] Even though the two versions of the story in the Book of Genesis and the Koran maintain a similar fabula, the narratives differ considerably in detail. The "Expulsion of *Adem* and *Havva* from the Garden of Eden" miniature allows us not only to outline the differences between the two texts but also to re-narrate the official story by means of a process of reading in detail.

(25). Barthes sees no "blind field" (57) in these photographs "with a good studium" which reveal nothing but the myth of the "ethnographic reality" of the other.

[19] All references to the Koran in this chapter are taken from the hypertext version of *The Meanings Of The Holy Qur'an* (2000) by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Figure 3. "Expulsion of Adam and Eve," *Falname*, artist unknown, 1614–16, Topkapi Museum, (H. 1703, f. 7b), 47.5 x 34.5 cm. Reproduced from Bağci, Çağman, and Renda, (2006: 195).

The miniature depicts male and female figures placed slightly to the left of the miniature plane. They are large enough to dominate the foreground of the picture. They are naked except for the tree-leaves that cover their genitals. The woman carries a sheaf of wheat in one hand and holds the man's hand with the other. Their faces are turned toward each other though their gazes do not meet. She has downcast eyes, whereas he has a hesitant look, as if he is torn between wanting to look at the woman and the viewer. They both have colossal flames surrounding their heads, albeit the flame surrounding him seems to be larger than the fire around the woman's figure. The skin of the man is marked with light brown paint, whereas the woman's skin is plain white.

The couple stands on the edge of a garden with oversized flowers. Behind the woman there is a snake crawling behind a bunch of leaves. At the rear back, we see the exterior walls of an edifice decorated with a web of ornamentation assuming hexagonal and other geometrical patterns. Its arches of violet marble are supported by red columns. The viewer gets a glimpse through the arches of the interior walls of the building. To the right of the arches, a figure with colorful wings wears a red outfit and is adorned with a golden crown. S/he holds on to the doorframe with one hand and with the other raises her/his forefinger towards her/his face, a gesture connoting surprise. In front of the figure there is a blue peacock with a flamboyant tail.

The viewer who is familiar with the myth will recognize the scene as that of the Fall. The naked male and female bodies whose genitals are covered with tree-leaves call to mind the story of Adam and Eve. The flames floating around the heads of the figures are enough of a motive to make it understood that the figures are not ordinary human beings but rather have something unearthly about them. Upon recognizing the details, the viewer can comfortably expand the angle of her look toward the background setting, which, without further examination, could be named the Garden of Eden: the figures' nakedness and the tree-leaves refer to the time in the story when the couple is still in paradise. The figure at the doorstep who looks completely human can be distinguished from the couple because of the exaggerated costume and colorful wings. These features would enable the viewer to identify the figure as an angel. The peacock, with his beautiful tail, is heavenly enough to make the viewer complete the scene just before her eyes alight on the serpent, the creature that actually concludes the whole story. Now, the viewer knows that she is looking at Adam and Eve and can conclude—because of the tree-leaves—that they have already committed the primordial sin. And then, having this knowledge, she expects that the inevitable expulsion is taking place. At this point, the

positioning of the couple to the left within the composition of the image gains an additional meaning since it enables the viewer to understand that they are turning their back to the other elements—the architectural setting, the angel, the peacock, and the serpent—and are facing toward the outside of the picture plane: the Garden of Eden.

This miniature painting is taken from the *Falname* (The Book of Divination), written in Turkish for Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603-1617).[20] It belongs to the literary genre known as *Falname/Falnama* that was widely produced within Islamic cultures. It includes "prayers, descriptions of the shrines of saints which were considered to have healing properties, miraculous events, and so forth" (Milstein, 1991: 25). Conventionally, the *falname*s deal with the lives of Koranic prophets and characters, as well as mythological creatures and their miracles. The stories include Abraham about to sacrifice his son Ishmael, Abraham cast into fire by Nimrod, Jonah and the fish, and Noah's ark and the deluge.

Although an exact date of the book cannot be given, in the preface the vizier and artist Kalendar Pasha states that he compiled this album as an offering to Sultan Ahmed I. It is known that Kalender became a vizier in 1023/1614 and served in this capacity for two years before he died. Since he refers to himself as a vizier in the preface, the compilation of the manuscript can be dated to these two years (1023–25/1614–16) (Bağci, forthcoming).[21] It contains 35 miniatures painted by many different artists (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974: 65). The style of the *Falname* miniatures, compared to that of the miniatures of previous Ottoman painting schools, show different features. In general, miniatures of *Falname* are fairly large in size for those of the Ottoman period.[22] They are also painted with thick brush-strokes using a comparatively wider color scheme. Moreover, compared to the manuscripts of the period, with their tiny elegant figures, these miniatures contain fewer large-size figures.

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[20] The version I analyze is held in the Library of the Topkapi Seraglio Museum (H. 1703). It consists of 41 pages of 68.3x 47.5 cm. Each page corner is illustrated with floral ornamentation. The Topkapi Museum owns thirty-five *Falname* manuscripts, most of which are without illustrations. There is another copy of the *Falname*, entitled *Falname-i Kuran* (Topkapi Museum, H. 1702) and written in Persian, belonging to the same period.

[21] All quotations in this section from Bağci are taken from her forthcoming essay "Images for Foretelling: Two Topkapı Falnamas."

[22] The size of the fall miniature is 47.5cm x 34.5 cm. According to art historian Metin And's classification, the size of *Falname*'s miniatures are of the larger size. (Ant, 2002: 131) Of course, it is the size of the book that determines the dimensions of the paintings, and not the other way around.

Even though the *Falname* contains no reference to the artist or artists who created the miniatures, Metin And hints at the possibility that its miniatures were made by artists from the *Esnaf-i Falciyan-i Musavver* (Guild of Image-readers).[23] This type of painter was mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, a famous seventeenth-century traveler, in his book *Seyahatname*, in the part where he gives a detailed account of the miniaturists in Istanbul.[24] Evliya Çelebi mentions one such seventeenth-century image-reader, namely Hoca Mehemmed Çelebi, who owned a workshop in Istanbul where he performed fortune-telling for the customers. At his shop, he displayed miniatures mounted on large-size papers that had been created by the much-admired masters of the past (Bağci). His clients would give him a silver coin (*akçe*) and select at random one of the displayed images. Consulting these images, which might depict scenes from different love stories or show the enmity and wars among the kings of the past, he would "recite his own metrical and rhyming verses."

As Bağci notes, no record survives of what Hoca Mehemmed's paintings were like, but in all likelihood they were related to a visual tradition of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *Falname*s, such as the one in question. The paintings of the *Falname* and the relevant texts for divination were juxtaposed in such a way that each miniature, placed on the verso of a folio, and the corresponding text, placed on the recto of the following one, completed each other.[25] The texts gave short information concerning the fortune of the person who had spontaneously opened the pages of the *Falname*. They were supplemented with two couplets in verse.

As Banu Mahir has proposed, because of their large size the *Falname* miniatures could have been used for pictorial recitation (2005: 70). In fact, in his preface to the *Falname*, Kalendar Pasha states that the book can be used for divination: a randomly chosen illustrated page would be interpreted as giving an indication of one's future.[26] Accordingly, Bağci argues that the miniatures of the

[23] Alternatively, Mahir suggests that the miniature reflects the style of the court painter Nakkash Hasan (2005: 70).

[24] These miniaturists appear to have been bazaar artists. More on the "bazaar miniatures" see next chapter.

[25] Bağci (forthcoming) contends that since the manuscript was rebound in the nineteenth century it is not certain whether the volume has retained its original sequence or was later rearranged; yet its codicological features suggest that it was kept in its original order.

[26] The Turkish translation of the preface can be found in Zuhal Akar (2002).

Falname must have been executed as facsimiles, as each miniature carries vertical or horizontal folds showing that they "must have been folded over and kept as loose leaves for quite a long time, before being bound as a codex." She adds that the miniatures might have been folded so that they could not easily be seen by the fortune-seeker so as to leave the selection to the divinely ordained fortune of the person.[27] In this respect, she suggests that the *Falname* manuscript brings two traditions together, "that of loose-leaf paintings used as devices for recitation, and that of the illustrated manuscript": hence juxtaposed here is a practice of urban popular culture with the practice of producing precious manuscripts for courtly circles.

In the preface, Kalendar Pasha gives us further clues about the album he prepared. He states that he "has collected, arranged and ornamented the illustrated, gilded, and calligraphically penned pages and plates, and submitted them as a gift to his imperial presence." He adds that he wishes that the sultan's *niyet*s (wishes) will come true. According to Bağci, unlike several other divinatory treatises, Kalender's *Falnama* does not require an intermediary person to interpret its omens. "It adopts a 'teach yourself' approach, by informing the reader of necessary techniques and providing relevant texts, thus facilitating the use of the paintings by any reader."[28]

The proposed divinatory function of the *Falname* leaves us with a complex cultural product that works at different levels. The book includes written text and visual illustrations that are orally interpreted by a potential reader/viewer. In this respect, the *Falname* operates simultaneously on textual, visual, and oral levels; it requires a reader of the text, a viewer of the image, and a storyteller who performs a tale. What interests me in the proposed act of self-fortune-telling is the perfomativity

[27] Bağci writes, "Apparently, the paintings in Hoca Mehemmed's shop as described by Evliya Çelebi were in the form of fascicules. Evliya Çelebi adds that the Hoca participated in the procession organized to celebrate the start of the Baghdad campaign in 1047/1637, exhibiting his pictures hung on a wooden cart. This detail confirms the supposition that Mehemmed's paintings were in separate folios" (forthcoming).

[28] The implied reader is, of course, the sultan. Bağci writes that Kalender "points out how necessary it is for the exalted sultans and high-ranking sovereigns to consider and contemplate the deeds of previous leaders, prophets and saints, and to comprehend, by analogy, the implications and the outcome of their own deeds. He goes on to state that the previous sovereigns had recorded the astrological events that had happened during their reigns [….] They had done this so that future fortune-seekers who, through the random practice and according to the proper methods of divination, would find their destinies in the deeds, written or painted, of earlier sultans and prophets, would be able to compare and comprehend their own situations in order to find the best avenue of action for themselves" (forthcoming).

of the story-teller.

The stories illustrated in the *Falname*, such as the expulsion from paradise, are based on religious texts. They are transmitted by textual, visual, or oral means and have become embedded in cultural memory. Although their cultural significance varies from culture to culture (and in some they may not even be known) and they have been adapted and transformed over time, they have nonetheless been taken for granted as "universal stories" that are fixed once and for all. However, the proposed act of fortune-telling based on these stories might offer an alternative dynamic and alter the status of such myths. The act of fortune-telling involves a subjective reinterpretation and reiteration of mythical stories directed toward one's past and future. In this respect, it provides the opportunity for a subjective re-interpretation of a culturally shared story. However, the act of the narrator entails not merely a recitation but a re-enactment of the story, which is fused with the personal experiences of the fortune-seeker that distort and re-narrativize the story anew each time it is presented.

As for the divination offered by the *Falname*, the act of fortune-telling gains additional significance in its congruence to the mythological status of the stories represented by the images. The subjective re-narrativization of such stories reclaims the dogmatic and almost objective nature of myths and opens them up to an ever-changing intersubjective interpretation by breaking their narrative closure. Hence, through the interpretation of the fortune-teller, "founding" myths such as that of Adam and Eve are brought into the present of the performance, not as a finished, commanding text but as a narrative to act upon within the present of the utterance.

Even though we cannot evaluate the ways in which Sultan Ahmed read his own fortune in the miniatures of the *Falname*, I suggest that fortune-telling provides us with a productive reading strategy. The performance of the fortune-teller is based on his or her identifying, within the confines of the culturally transmitted codes of divination, particular details or their combinations to be signs auguring certain events. In particular, image-based divination such as tarot, coffee-cup reading, and the reading of the images from the *Falname*, rely on the recognition of visual details and the interpretation of them according to a textual or oral pre-text. Yet this reading entails the reinterpretation of the pre-text in relation to the image toward an interlocutor who is the subject of the divination. Therefore, the act of divination is a form of visual storytelling that, although stemming from the image, is not bounded by it, since the interpretation is directed at an

external interlocutor of the story. The act of the fortune-teller is, consequently, an act of subjective re-narrativization of the image that does not necessarily coincide with a preceding text.

The transcription of the method promoted by divination into the language used in scholarly analysis of images gives us a productive juxtaposition that sets iconographic analysis beside a semiotic narrative reading based on the primacy of the pictorial detail. In what follows I will first provide a critical discussion of the basic tenets of iconographic analysis and then analyze the "Expulsion of *Adem* and *Havva* from the Garden of Eden" miniature in detail—and for the detail—to see what it reveals about the contemporary viewer of the image.

Iconographic Analysis

I have stated that the simple reading of the miniature as "The Fall" is based on the viewer's ability to recognize the figures and pictorial details in a synecdochal relation to an external, canonical text. Such recognition is socially bounded and culturally mediated. The viewer does not have to refer to the text directly, that is, she does not have to have read the text, say, in Genesis or the related verses in the Koran. She only has to know the codes to be able to recognize a particular detail in reference to the pre-text so as to make up a culturally adequate reading of an image. Once the visual marks have been found, such as those of Adam's and Eve's nakedness and the tree-leaves, and have been interpreted in relation to the pre-text, the pre-text takes over the image, thereby simplifying the reading process and allowing the viewer to read the other details in relation to that particular text. According to Norman Bryson, such reading is based on the viewer's familiarity with the relevant iconographic or denotative codes (1983: 60-65; 68-69).

As a model for the interpretation for works of visual art, iconographic analysis was advanced by the art historian Erwin Panofsky. In his preface to the *Studies in Iconology* (1939), Panofsky distinguished three levels of investigation. The first, *pre-iconographic description*, depends on practical experience and interprets the subject matter as distinct from its historical and textual embodiments (e.g., identifying the male and female figures). The iconographic level of analysis (in the narrower sense of the word, as Panofsky put it) has everything to do with the literary precedents that "read" the pre-

iconographic level in tandem with the texts that they illuminate. This phase requires a familiarity with events and objects historically represented by certain objects or themes (e.g., halo/flame representing holiness). The third and last level of analysis is the interpretative iconographic analysis (in a deeper sense – iconographic synthesis or, in short, iconology) in which the viewer apprehends the intrinsic meaning or content of the work by "ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion—unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work" (Panofsky, 1962: 6). In such an analysis a painting is interpreted as a cultural document, expressive of the "essential tendencies of the human mind" as they have crystallized in a particular historical, personal, and cultural moment.[29]

The fundamental precept of iconographic reading is the recognition of details, figures, or composition in relation to a preceding body of knowledge. This knowledge is by no means is "inscribed at the deepest level in each of the individuals sharing one culture, and allowing them to recognize immediately a given configuration of lines or dots the image of a house"; on the contrary, "it is a knowledge which is 'cultivated', elaborated, linked, in the final analysis, to the textual order" (Damisch, 1975: 237). Therefore, the iconographic method is a discursive mode of analysis that subordinates visually represented elements to something else—that is, to the verbal pre-text. In such reading, a visual detail functions as a peg that articulates itself to a pre-text, which in turn overrides the image through indexical identification. Here, the details "signify not a doxic concept but a doxic story" thereby becoming a synecdochal sign for the story as a whole (Bal, 1991: 179). Hence, they enable the viewer to transport the seen to what is verbally known: a pre-known story.

As my short reading of the miniature indicates, the recognition, for example, of the leaves covering the genitals of a nude couple as the "fig leaves" that Adam and Eve

[29] Panofsky's last level of analysis argues for the making of a cultural history of a particular epoch via the unraveling of symbols "in the Cassirerian sense." His purpose seems to be to study a worldview that is necessarily expressed in a work of art. Such an analysis puts the work in its particular context of production "as it is in its own time and place" (quoted in Holly, 1984: 169) and thus neglects the response and interpretation of the contemporary viewer. Moreover, what iconological analysis tells about a culture is somewhat tautological in the sense that it suggests a formulation like "such kind of culture could only produce such and such a work." However, as Michael Ann Holly states, Panofsky's iconological analyses fall short of providing such historical explanations and, generally speaking, art historians are content to practice the second level of analysis of iconography (1984: 158- 193). For this reason, I focus on the iconographic analysis. For the historical and theoretical background of Panofsky's work, see Holly (1984) and Christopher S. Wood's introduction to Panofsky's *Perspective as a Symbolic Form* (1991).

supposedly used to cover their sexual organs brings the textual into the visual so as to unravel other details properly.[30] As such, the details become signs that refer to stories, yet they do not make up the stories since the internal signification within the image is subordinated to the text outside of it. In this sense, the function of the details in iconographic reading is similar to that of the *studium*. Much like the contract arrived at between the image's creator and its viewer, as Barthes argued for regarding the *studium*, iconographic reading looks for such an agreement between the two on the basis of the pre-text that is supposedly shared by both parties. This agreement, in return, impedes the emergence of an alternative reading that might stem from the detail.

Although iconography has been one of the principal methods for traditional art-historical analysis of narrative images, it has essential shortcomings. As Bal argues, iconography provides the analyst with "a useful yet limited code, a code which like all others can be used to ward off threatening interpretations, to fit the works into a reassuring tradition, but which can also be taken beyond its most obvious use to yield a powerful critical reading" (1991: 178-79). The mode of reading it suggests is conservative in the sense that it depends on the recognition of previously given motifs and idioms that eventually privileges tradition over innovation (Bal, 1991: 214). Second, it finds it sufficient to relate the recognized motif to the pre-text. This process eventually precludes a dialogical interpretative process. This mode of reading enables the viewer to put the work of art within a particular historical and cultural framework, but it denies the other interpretative capacities a contemporary viewer might bring to the image. Third, by neglecting the viewer's active participation, iconographic analysis closes down the possibility of her offering an alternative reading of the image. It only provides the viewer with an "underlying" story that ultimately refutes the particular visual story that takes place within the work of art.

To overcome these drawbacks of iconographic reading, I will combine it with a mode of visual analysis that sustains the tension between the pre-text brought by the iconographic mode and a visual narrative reading in which the viewer produces her story through a detailed reading of the image. Such an analysis enables the viewer to produce new meanings of the image in a manner analogous to the act of fortune-telling.

[30] There is a reference to the fig leaves in Genesis 3.7. The Koran does not give any details regarding the fig tree but it mentions that the couple sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies (*al-Araf*, surah. 22). However, the fig leaf has been a traditional attributed of the story.

Prefiguring the Miniature

> The seeker of the fortune has reached the omen of *Hazret-i Adem* and *Havva*'s departure from paradise. Its past indicates to repentance, its future to auspiciousness, radiance, and happiness. It seems like *Allah* will grant you a high position as an owner of an estate and you will not appreciate the merit of the status. You should abstain from atrocious thoughts. Protect yourself from Satan's misgivings. Stay away from people of the opposite sex with malicious intentions so that you shall enjoy a peaceful life. Do not fail to fulfill the (religious) obligations and make charitable offerings in order to attain what you want. [31]

This quote would be the fortune given to the fortune-seeker if she would happen upon the Fall miniature. It is written in a rather colloquial language and makes no reference to the details of the story. However, the story's main theme of repentance and forgiveness followed by prosperity is sustained as the framework of the fortune's narrative. Even though it is a "good" fortune for the seeker, it does not provide its viewer with a narrative structure to read the image. As Bağci notes, paintings used for divination illustrate an individual scene or are portraits or group portraits meant to evoke a prediction in response to an inquiry. She argues:

> Rather than visualizing a certain narrative or cycle, they are singular depictions of certain episodes or personages. In other words, they themselves do not interpret a narrative; rather, they need to be interpreted by means of a narrative [….] Instead of illustrating the text as an additional, perhaps decorative device, divination images precede the text; they stand alone as the principal medium in their own genre of communication. (forthcoming)

In the absence of a proximate explanatory text, the fortune-teller would interpret the image from her subjective point of view. The art historian, by contrast, would turn to

[31] I have translated the text from Zuhal Akar's (2002) contemporary Turkish translation of the original. The accompanying couplet reads:
Cenab-i Hazret-i Adem zi bag-i cennetten/ Huruc eyledi emr itdi ani (…?) kerim
Hakikati bu durur isteyen riza-yi ilah/Geredur isteseler canini ide teslim

other canonical texts so as to bestow the figures and details with an "accurate" meaning. A brief inquiry into the conventions of Islamic visual culture would allow us to recognize the burning flames around the heads of the figures as the Islamic counterpart to the Christian halo, which symbolizes saintliness. According to Esin, the prototypes of such flames are seen in pre-Islamic *Uigur* miniatures (1960: 8). The sheaf of wheat that Eve holds symbolizes the forbidden fruit in Islamic iconography, even though it was not stated in the Koran but in other texts (Esin, 1960: 8).

Similarly, the serpent and the peacock are not mentioned in the Koran. This discrepancy between the miniature's iconography and the story's Koranic source allows us to recognize that the miniature actually draws on a wide spectrum of iconographic repertory, such as the works of Tabari, Tha'labi, and Kisa'i (Brosh and Milstein, 1991: 26). Brosh and Milstein explain that according to these authors, *Iblis* (Satan), searching a way back into Paradise past its closed gates, had two collaborators: the peacock and the serpent. Aware of their vanity, "*Iblis* convinced them that only by eating the forbidden fruit would they contrive to spare their beauty from the destructive changes of time" (Brosh and Milstein, 1991: 26). The peacock introduces Iblis to the serpent "who concealed the Satan within his mouth and slipped him into Paradise in order to tempt Adam and Eve" (26). This information enables the viewer to regard the serpent and the peacock as Satan's collaborators.

The figure with wings standing in the background, who is watching the couple leave paradise, could be identified as Gabriel. As Esin states, the red color of his dress symbolizes the "burning love between God and man that will eventually consume the evil in mankind," whereas the belt that binds the tunic stands for "reticence from evil" (1960: 8). According to Esin, the "Turkish" angels wear closed crowns, a motif that goes back to the paintings of the seventh century (8).

Another textual reference prompted by the Fall miniature must have been *Hadiqat al Su'ada'* (The Garden of the Happy), written by the famous sixteenth-century poet Fuduli.[32] According to Brosh and Milstein, the sorrow and shame of being exiled from the beloved Creator and the possibility of return are the main themes of Fuduli's version of the Adam and Eve story. He

[32] Written in Turkish (possibly in Baghdad), *Hadiqat al Su'ada'* tells the story of the martyrdom or the massacre of Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, namely the Kerbela. The beginning of the text includes the stories of Koranic prophets such as Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Joseph.

> glossed over the narrative details, which were generally known to his readers, while elaborating upon the emotional reactions of the sinners and the other inhabitants of Paradise[….] At the end of the story, Adam takes Eve by the hand, puts one foot out of Paradise, and gazes for a long time to the right and to the left, hoping that the sun of benevolence and mercy will rise and enlighten the darkness of separation (from God). When no sign is given, he steps out and says: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful" and the gates of mercy open at his words. (1991: 29)

Brosh and Milstein suggest that since Fuduli's Sufi-inspired interpretation differs from the mainstream account of "cruel exile," most of the illustrations of the text present a somewhat different iconography from those of other representations of the myth (28). The Fall miniatures from two different seventeenth-century copies of *Hadiqat al Su'ada'* depict the dramatic moment of departure when Adam holds Eve's hand and steps out the Garden while she herself is still within the gate (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The other sinners—the snake, the peacock, and Iblis depicted as a black man—sit outside of paradise in a corner of the composition. Numerous angels are "depicted as either accompanying the exiles in a sympathetic parade, or watching them from a balcony" (29).

Even though the *Falname* miniature seems to depict the same scene, it diverges from the compositional scheme used in contemporaneous miniatures representing the Fall. However, by keeping the two important motifs—the couple's holding of each other's hands and Adam's stepping outside the gates—it brings the textual source into the picture. Subsequently, it diverges from the text by including details that do not belong to the source, such as the sheaf of wheat and the presence of the peacock and the snake in the garden.

Figure 4. "Expulsion of Adam and Eve," *Hadiqat al Su'ada'*, artist unknown, seventeeth century, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, (1967, f.8a).

Figure 5. "Expulsion of Adam and Eve," *Hadiqat al Su'ada'*, artist unknown, seventeeth century, British Library, (Or. 12009, f. 7v).

As an addition and an alternative to this basic iconographic analysis, I will turn to the image itself and read such details—which do not necessarily concur with textual sources—not only for themselves but also in relation to one another as elements of a narrative syntagm that *makes* a story. I will demonstrate the ways in which a reading process attentive to details can alter the simple iconographic meaning of the image and allow us to "celebrate" old myths.

Falling Upside Down

In his essay "The Detail and the *Pan*" (1986), Georges Didi-Huberman questions "what can rightfully be meant by detailed knowledge of a painting" (2005: 229). Contrasting the detail to what he calls the *pan*, he suggests that interpretation of the detail "tends toward something like a secondary elaboration of the image, in other words, toward a work of stoppage that enables the assignment of definite meanings and a logical organization of the phases of a *historia*" (269-70).[33] Therefore, ultimately, reading for the detail entails a semantic closure. However, his approach neglects to fully consider the potential of a secondary elaboration of the image through details by discarding that the viewer is able to perform *stories* instead of merely following the phases of a *historia*.

However, his discussion about the operation of the detail is relevant for the interpretation process I will put forward. According to Didi-Huberman, the detail encompasses three operations, which are more or less self-evident:

> First that of *getting closer*: one "enters into the details" as one penetrates the rarefied air of epistemic intimacy. But this intimacy entails some violence, perverse without any doubt; one gets close only to *cut up*, to break down, to take apart. Such is the basic meaning of the French word *découper*, its etymological tenor—a pruning or cutting—and the first definition of it in

[33] Influenced by Barthes's *stadium–punctum* distinction, Didi-Huberman develops an anti-iconographic reading of paintings by focusing on patches of color that do not constitute the details that contribute to the painting's referential meaning. He treats such patches as symptoms of the process of painting that disrupt the image's coding within the frame. In Chapter 5 I discuss the notion of the *pan* and symptom in more detail.

> Littré: "the separation of a thing into several parts, into pieces," which opens up an entire semantic constellation [….] Finally, through an extension no less perverse, the detail designates an exactly symmetrical, even opposite operation, one that consists in gathering all the pieces together, or at least *accounting for them* in full: "to detail" is to enumerate all the parts of a whole, as if "the cutting up" has served only to make possible a complete accounting without reminder—a sum. So a triply paradoxical operation is in play here, one that gets closer to better to cut up, and cuts up the better to make whole. As if "whole" existed only in bits, provided these can be added up. (230)

These layers of cutting up and montage inform my analysis of the Fall miniature. I will get close to the miniature so as to break it down into its details—details that do not strictly refer to the official *historia*. This detailing of the image, in each step, yields a new whole, a new visual story that does not accord with the iconographic textual sources. This approach eventually accords with Bağci's suggestion that "divination images precede the text; they stand alone as the principal medium in their own genre of communication." In this sense, these images themselves "do not interpret a narrative; rather, they need to be interpreted by means of a narrative" (forthcoming).

Contrary to the conventional viewing orientation in which one enters the picture plane preferably from the upper right-hand corner, I would like to start reading the image from the bottom and then proceed toward the upper part of the miniature. As the main narrative takes place in the middle of the miniature, the lower part of the miniature might escape the viewer's attention. Even though the scant ground on which Adam and Eve stand is carefully rendered, it could easily fall out, so to speak, of the narrative construction of the miniature because of its marginal positioning. This piece of land is shown in stark contradiction to the elaborate garden, filled as it is with vivacious flora. Barren and rocky (Figure 6), it does not extend beyond where the couple stands: it is as if it has appeared there so as to situate the two figures upon it. The difference between the fertile garden and the dark stony soil can be read as a demarcation between celestial and earthly ground. Adam and Eve step on this ground firmly, crossing beyond the celestial boundary.

Figure 6. Detail, "Adam and Eve."

In this respect, contrary to the iconography of the miniatures of Fuduli's text, which concentrate on departure as a passage, the *Falname* version depicts the moment when the two have already fallen from grace. They have literally left paradise behind and, hand in hand, are about to take their first steps on the barren earth. They seem ready to move on and start their new life outside paradise. In line with Fuduli's text, this departure is not an exile but a new beginning for the couple. They have just passed out of the gates of mercy and have landed on earthly ground.

Adam has completed the first step forward and sets his feet firmly on the ground. Unlike the restless Adam, Eve stands still. Her eyes downcast, she seems contemplative, as if faltering, unsure whether to move. I propose that the difference between the bodily postures of Adam and Eve points to a tension between the couple. Adam wants to lead Eve in a certain direction while Eve stands still as if immobile. Adam has grabbed her hand, but she has not reacted; she has not grasped his hand in return (Figure 7). This reluctance can be read in two ways: the miniature either depicts the moment just before Eve reacted and closed her fingers around his hand or shows a lasting gesture that lets the viewer think that she will never respond to Adam's hand. Although both readings are plausible, I argue that the second reading allows us to recognize an alternative interpretation of the Fall myth prevalent in Islamic cultures. Metin And notes that according to one legend, Adam and Eve ended up in different parts of the world: Adam on the top of a mountain in India and Eve in Jeddah in present-day Saudi Arabia, where her alleged tomb is located (1998: 91). Seen in this legendary light, Eve's open fingers can be read as an indexical sign of her unwillingness to follow Adam's footsteps and of her desire to go her own way. Although her feet are turned toward Adam, her eyes are directed toward Adam's hand, as if she is questioning his decision. It is perhaps the moment right before Eve took back her hand and began making her way toward, purportedly, Jeddah. In this way the iconographic detail of the couple holding hands gives way to a variant story by means of a detailed reading of the textual motif.[34]

[34] In a quite heretical way, the positioning of the couple can be read as a wedding portrait. In his analysis of the so-called Arnolfini portrait (1434) by Jan van Eyck, Panofsky identifies the words or

Figure 7. Detail, "Adam and Eve."

Eve's potential choice to leave Adam so as to be alone alters the official version of the myth, which purports to show a couple already bound together in love. Metin And suggests that after the couple went their separate ways, Adam decided to look for Eve and found her (1998: 91). Only then did they fall in love. In this capacity, the speculative reading can be furthered to propose that Adam's love was not returned by Eve at first. This is why Adam seems to be insistently trying, with his other "speaking hand," to persuade Eve to come with him.[35] The gesture of the right hand can be read as an indexical sign of invitation and encouragement regarding the earthly life that awaits them. Alternatively, its placement on the heart can also be seen as a performative act, one that signifies an oath of fidelity and a guarantee of a safe start. Eve hesitates, contemplates Adam's proposal, and leaves for the viewer the aura of her indecisive mood.

In her free hand Eve carries a sheaf of wheat as evidence of the crime they committed. She has taken the forbidden fruit with her to the earthly realm beyond paradise. In this sense, it is her who is tainted by the act of insubordination. However, in the Koran there is no reference to Eve eating the fruit in the first place. Iblis seduces

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actions that legitimize marriage as (a) an appropriate formula solemnly pronounced by bride and bridegroom (which the bridegroom confirms by raising his hand), (b) the tradition of a pledge (usually a ring placed on the finger of the bride), (c) and, most important, the joining of the hands. He then argues that van Eyck in an innovative manner painted a marriage portrait promoted by the inclusion the inscription above the mirror (*Johannes de Eyck fuit hic*) and certain symbols such as the (wedding) candle, the figure of St. Margaret triumphing over the dragon, and a little dog. In a similar manner, one can argue that the couple holding hands, Adam's hand on his chest, and the bundle Eve holds can be seen as symbols for marriage. However, this reading would impose western cultural codes on an image from a different cultural context. See Panofsky (1934).

[35] For "speaking hand" as an iconographic symbol representing speech, see Bal (1991).

Adam by whispering to him of eternal life, and they eat the fruit together.[36] In the two miniatures from the *Hadiqat al Su'ada'*, for example, Eve does not carry the bundle out of paradise. Here, the Fall miniature diverges from the text and provides us with a different interpretation.

Seen in close proximity, Eve's hand firmly grasps the bundle, the strength of her fingers emphasized. However, the sheaf of wheat should not be read as the primordial sin, as in the Islamic tradition the couple is forgiven for their transgression. Therefore, the sheaf can be seen as a "souvenir" from the Garden of Eden carried away by the woman. In relation to the barren earthly ground, the sheaf might be read as a symbol of the beginning of agriculture on earth: Eve holds on to the means to turn infertile land into fruitful ground on which to settle.[37]

Another detail I want to concentrate on is the color difference between Adam and Eve, which, actually, strikes the viewer instantantly. This difference was also asserted in the miniatures of the *Hadiqat al Su'ada'*. Apart from their distinct skin colors, there are few physical disparities between the figures that would enable the viewer to distinguish their sexual difference. Leaving aside Eve's small breasts, both have round, weak shoulders, long arms, and rounded waists. Adam's physiognomic traits, such as his long hair (though he also appears to be balding) and tiny red lips, do not appear masculine enough. In the absence of physical disparities between them, the figures are uncoupled via diverse means of differentiation. One such means is the differences in hairstyle; Eve has her hair tied on the sides by means of remarkable hairclips. Another is the dissimilarity of the leaves that cover their genitals. Additionally, Adam is completely naked apart from the fig leaves, whereas Eve wears a glittering earring that resonates with the golden flames around their heads, the peacock's tail, and the angel's shimmering costume.

Without striking physical differentiation between Adam and Eve, the skin color of each becomes even more significant. White has been culturally associated with

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[36] See *Surah* 20 *Ta'ha* verses 117- 121: "Then We said: 'O Adam! verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery. / 'There is therein (enough provision) for thee not to go hungry nor to go naked, / 'Nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's heat.' / But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, 'O Adam! shall I lead thee to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?' / In the result, they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden: thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced."

[37] In a way the sheaf can be associated with the story of Cain and Abel in which Cain, the tiller of the ground, is cursed by the "wheat" and is forced to become a wanderer, like Eve.

virtuousness and in this capacity it intensifies Eve's innocence.[38] Furthermore, whiteness simultaneously differentiates Eve from Adam and connects her to Gabriel on the basis of similarity of their skin colors (Figure 8). I argue that such a similarity is significant because it is the skin color that fundamentally differentiates Adam from Eve. The continuity between Eve and the angel can either be read as marking the angel as female or as giving Eve angelic qualities that have not been bestowed to Adam. Either reading breaks the hierarchy that is established with the pre-text by elevating Eve higher in the "celestial hierarchy."[39]

Figure 8. .Detail, "Adam and Eve."

The difference in skin color thus subverts the expected hierarchy, and the compositional layout of the miniature reinforces an alternative celestial categorization. As I mentioned, Adam and Eve stand on the earth, which is clearly demarcated from the fertile ground of the Garden. The edifice in the background should be the pavilion of paradise. Gabriel and the peacock stand and stare at paradise's threshold. In this sense, the exterior walls of the building mark the boundaries of paradise. This frontier leaves the middle garden stuck in between paradise and earth as a mediating zone, not unlike purgatory. The only inhabitant of this zone is the serpent, harking to the space behind a bunch of leaves.

[38] For whiteness as a racial category promoted in diverse visual media see Richard Dyer (1997).

[39] The celestial hierarchy is clearly stated in the Koran. See, for example, Surah 17 *Isra* (The Night Journey) /*Bani Isra'il* (The Children of Israel) verse 61: "Behold! We said to the angels: 'Bow down unto Adam': They bowed down except Iblis: He said, 'Shall I bow down to one whom Thou didst create from clay?'" and in Surah 7 *Al A'raf* (The Heights), verse 12: "((Allah)) said: 'What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?' He said: 'I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.'"

These leaves do not seem to be attached to the ground. In addition, they bear no similarity to the rest of the leaves depicted in the miniature, including those of Adam and Eve. As I noted before, the writer Tabari proposed that Iblis slipped into paradise inside the serpent's mouth. It can thus be suggested that the bunch of leaves are symbolic signs locating Iblis within the intermediary zone of the narrative.

At this point, the miniature once more diverges from the account of *Hadiqat al Su'ada'*, which initially seemed to be the immediate textual source of the image. While the two miniatures of *Hadiqat* positions the collaborators—Iblis, peacock, and the snake—in the corner of the miniature planes so as to mark them as the ultimate sinners, the *Falname* version incorporates them firmly in the composition and gives them a central role in the visual narrative. While the serpent and Iblis are placed within the medial area, the peacock is still in paradise. As if it will continue to live in paradise, the peacock stands still at the doorstep accompanying the angel, watching the couple leave. Gabriel, on the other hand, is almost merged into the pavilion as the color of his cloak matches that of the interior. Moreover, he does not step on the same ground as the peacock. He is somehow elevated from the floor.

This reading along the diagonal compositional line of the miniature brings forth the celestial nuances among the figures. Gabriel, as he stands resolutely in paradise, is the most sacrosanct of all. He is followed by the peacock, and then the snake and Iblis, both belonging to the in-between space. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, are out of the celestial grounds, even though Eve shares a symbiotic relation with the angel on the basis of skin color. In this capacity, Eve is granted with earthly and celestial qualities.

Another pictorial detail, however, re-emphasizes Eve's difference from Adam. This is Adam's overemphasized belly button, the same bodily feature that marks Eve through its absence (Figure 9). Perhaps because the bunch of leaves that cover Adam's sex is placed lower than Eve's, her belly button is invisible. Whatever the intention of the artist was, I suggest that the disparity is significant, especially since Adam's belly button is emphasized with striking bold lines that tickle the viewer's eyes. The overemphasized navel, however, should not be taken as a banal excess, an "effect of the real" that assures a discourse of realism.[40] Neither should it be discarded as a form of visual noise to be discarded so as to retain the continuity of the act of looking. Instead, I propose to read it

[40] In "L'effet de réel," Roland Barthes discuses the function of a barometer hanging on the wall in the Aubain's house in Flaubert's *Un coeur simple* and argues that such insignificant textual details retain the effect of narrative reality by means of their very absence of meaning. See Barthes (1968).

in interaction with other details and stories that we think we know. At first glance, Adam's belly button works like the other details that distinguish the two figures from one another. Yet, when read in relation to the skin color difference that separates Eve from Adam and relates her to the angel standing in the background, the belly button tells us more than a simple element of sexual differentiation would.

The belly button provides us with what Bal called the "navel of the image." The navel is "a center without meaning, it is yet a meaningful pointer that allows plurality and mobility, that allows the viewer to propose new readings" of the image she contemplates (1991: 22). It is a tiny detail, a pointless point that somehow falls outside of the logic of the scene represented. It appears as noise that signals the limits of signification and draws attention to subjectivity of the viewer involved. The navel is a locus of shifting meaning that enables the viewer to re-narrate a story that departs from the "official" interpretation of the image. It "is a metaphor for an element, often a tiny detail, that hits the viewer, is processed by her or him, and textualizes the image on its own terms" (22).

Figure 9. Detail, "Adam and Eve."

Hence, as a literal navel, the belly button attracts the viewer outside the image to another story; then pulls her back again into the image by prompting a different reading that complicates and distorts the "official" myth of the Fall. As Bal puts it, the navel is a trace of the mother, a sign that qualifies the autonomy of the subject, male and female alike (1991: 22). Adam's visible belly button, then, marks him as a human being who was once connected to the mother's womb. To start off with such a reading is to have the viewer be directed to another "universal" story, that of the Creation.[41] Such a flashback to the Creation story within the image is, I propose, already present in the image. Along with

[41] For the "creation story" in the Koran, see Surah 3 *Aal `Imran* (The Household of `*Imran*) verse 59 "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be'. And he was." See also footnote 24.

the forbidden fruit, the belly button completes the celestial, spiral temporality of the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden—the creation / the primordial sin / the Fall—in one image.

However, my aim is not to discuss whether in reality Adam had a belly button or not. What strikes me is Eve's lack of one. Her not having a belly button triggers the idea that she was not born through natural means, which turns the creation story upside-down. This simple lack not only breaks Eve's ontological dependence on Adam but also makes her, in contrast to the texts through which we come to know the story, the first human to be created. The reading of Eve's lack of a belly button in relation to Adam's *excessive* scar, furthermore, symbiotically connects them together through an invisible umbilical cord—one that allows the speculation that Eve gave birth to Adam. Hence, the maternal cord replaces the rib out of which Eve was supposedly created, according to one version of the Judeo-Christian myth of creation.[42] Such a speculative reading – for those viewers who want to follow it – makes Eve the mother of all human beings and thus also of Adam, once thought the first but now regarded as the second human to be created. Taken together, the story of inappropriate family relations created by the belly button and the whiteness that link Eve and the angel create another image of Eve for the viewer.

The New Eve

My reading for the visual narrative triggered by certain details follows the path of the performance of a fortune-teller. The omen brought by the new narrative concerns the status of the Fall as a universal myth, and, above all, the image of Eve. The reading alters

[42]The Bible describes the creation of Eve in these terms: "The Lord God said: 'It is not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a help meet' [....] The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam [....] and He took one of his ribs [....] and made He a woman [....] and brought her unto the man [....] and [....] Adam said, '[....] She shall be called woman'" (Genesis 2:18,21-3). Whereas in the Koran there is no reference to the rib story, there is a subtle reference to the womb in general. For example in *Surah* 4 *An-Nisaa'* (Women) verse 1 reads: "O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;—reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for God ever watches over you." In this capacity, it can be argued that Adam and Eve (although her name is never mentioned in the Koran, she is traditionally called Hawwa) were created together. In her book *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (1987), Bal comments on the ambiguity of the rib: "The organ taken from it is supposed to be the *rib*. This word has been widely discussed. Some scholars think it means *side*. It could, then, be a euphemism for 'belly,' as 'feet' often stands for 'testicles.' In that case, it could refer to the womb, an apparent reversal of sexual function that is not at all unthinkable in the case of this undifferentiated earth creature" (115).

the founding myth, which is, as Bal suggest, "the first love story of the Bible, the first love story of our culture." This myth "has been most generally abused, presented as evidence that it was the woman who began it all, that hers is all the guilt"—a story that, in short, has been "widely adduced as a justification for misogyny" (1987: 104). The miniature enables us to acknowledge a culturally different interpretation of the myth in which the themes of guilt and exile are replaced by forgiveness and prosperity. In addition, the detailed reading of the image brings about an alternative version to that of "the first love story of our culture." The new one deconstructs the "universal" story of disobedience and punishment; of withdrawal from home and living in exile; of the end of innocence and the beginning of sin, guilt, lament, regret, and shame.

In particular, the new story presents a "new Eve" who is different than the woman who is cast in the patriarchal version as the first sinner of humankind. The new story no longer accommodates the binary poles of good and bad, women and men. At first glance, the linked hands of the figures turn the myth of the Fall into a story of love, care, courage, equality, and companionship. A detailed look at the hands, however, magnifies an interpretation in which Eve is reluctant to hold Adam's hand. This detail implies that Eve is not a submissive character; on the contrary, she is ready to go her own way. This reading underlines Eve as a character who has been given—and who exercises—a choice. Moreover, such a reading of the detail opens toward a new, alternative version of the myth that is not, or at least not initially, a love story.

Furthermore, the forbidden fruit in Eve's hand is both a reminder of the couple's presence in the Garden and a promise of the beginning of agriculture, which she has the capacity to initiate. This new image of Eve is further promoted by the discrepancy of skin color between her and Adam and the absence of her navel. Her white skin differentiates Eve from Adam while simultaneously relating her to Gabriel; this elevates her in the celestial hierarchy while keeping intact her human qualities. The navel's absence reconnects Eve to Adam in a somewhat perverse manner as the woman who gave birth to him. In this capacity, she is the first human, which turns the myth of Creation upside-down. Or perhaps places it back upon its feet again.

These details prick up out of the image, out of the comfortable chain of signification, and construct another image of Eve quite different than the one "our culture" has long suggested. [43] Without this tangling with the details, the miniature would

[43] I do not wish to argue here that the Islamic myth of the creation and the Fall are less misogynistic than its Judeo-Christian counterpart or that, in this respect, Islamic cultures are more gender-aware

simply have been one of the misogynistic stories of the Fall. In this respect, the details not only open up the possibility of a new seeing, but also enable the image to talk back and warn the viewer against the imposition of one unified cultural framework. Through a narrative reading in detail, the alterity of the image can be captured through the viewer's active interpretation.

This distorted and intimate reading also shows the difficulty of pinning down one "official" pre-text according to which the artist creates her work. If the Koran were taken as "the text," the reading of the miniature would be absurd or even perverse in many senses. At this point, iconographic analysis would provide the viewer with an interpretation by tracing the handing down of the iconographic motifs that fall out of the "text," such as the burning flames, the peacock, the angelic garments, and the sheaf of wheat. However, as iconographic reading concentrates on tradition rather than innovative negotiations, it falls short of including, for example, the gesture of the couple's holding hands or Adam's overemphasized navel, details that do not *have* but *produce* a narrative antecedent. Once these narrative details have been spotted, the willing viewer might find alternative intellectual traditions that encourage her speculative reading.[44]

In "Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow: The Emergence of the Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3)" (1985), Bal proposes a reading of Genesis that somehow puts Eve in a more favorable light than is the case in the common uses of the text.

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than Judaism or Christianity In fact, if one is to compare the two versions of the creation and the Fall, it does seem that the Koranic version is less misogynistic, especially in the verses concerning the primordial sin. Yet evaluating cultures on the basis of religious texts misses the historical and socio-political differences at play.

[44] Instead of a passive iconographic passing on of motifs, I propose to understand the interaction among the pre-text and images as an intertextual relationship in which the artist making the later image actively interprets, reverts, and reworks the earlier image and pre-text. In fact, the art of miniature painting is a repetitive reproduction of certain core images and illustrative cycles over and over again. Most of the time, artists of the different epochs and different cultures copied the ready-made schemes, especially the battle scenes, which might easily make one conclude that the practice was bound by canon and tradition rather than variation and innovation. Accordingly, art historians have focused on the transmission of iconographic motifs and figures. Such inquiry, no doubt, is important in order to understand the cultural transmission of visual images from a historical perspective. For example, Serpil Bağci states that some eighteenth-century copies of the Ottoman translation of *Aja'ibu'l-makhluqat* of Qyazvini contain numerous images of the marvels of creation that certainly repeat the iconographic types developed in the fourteenth-century *Ilkhanid* manuscripts in various languages. However, indicating the repetition of iconographic types hardly takes innovation into account so as to explain visual translation across cultures and time. Instead of imitation or reproduction, I suggest that the concept of intertextuality would help us gain a better understanding of visual translation. Bağci (2000) puts forward such an analysis (without employing the concept of intertextuality) in her comparative reading of Ottoman and Persian versions of *Sahnama*s. For a comparison between iconography and intertextuality, see Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson (1991: 206-7).

She notes that her point "is not to establish anachronistically a 'feminist' content of the Bible"; rather, she tries to account for the "nature and function of a patriarchal myth which is related to an ideology that cannot be monolithic" (22). Similarly, my reading indicates an effort to demonstrate the dynamic nature of myths. Accordingly, I read for the victimized and emphasize the visual instances in which the myth is reversed. In this sense, my reading aligns with Bal's hysterical semiotics as a strategy of analysis.[45] The term hysterical poetics entails "a search for the displaced, the unsaid, but often visible, sign of the unspeakable experience" (1991: 411, fn. 9). According to Bal, rather than for the plot, such strategy

> reads for the image; rather than reading for the main line or proposition, it reads for the detail: and rather than reading for the hero or main character, it reads for the victim. Rather than reading for logic, linearity, and literality, it displaces these, replacing them with a scene-oriented simultaneity in which the categories of literal and figural change places. Thus our "hysterical" semiotic counters, reverses, and thereby denounces and undermines the violence of rhetoric that obliterates the rhetoric of violence. (1991: 63)

This reading strategy, I propose, underlines the tension between iconographic analysis and narrative reading that I have been demonstrating in this chapter. The first method privileges linearity and literality as well as the main plot and the main character. The latter mode, on the contrary, encourages the analyst to locate herself on the side of the detail and the "victim," as I have tried to do in my analysis of the Fall miniature. In a sense, iconographic reading tends to sustain myths (with their presumed rhetoric of violence) whereas the narrative mode of visual analysis opens up the possibility of reviving old myths.

As I have proposed, my methodological concern in this chapter is to maintain a productive tension between these two modes of reading. This enables us to acknowledge that iconographic reading recognizes a particular traditional story, whereas narrative reading recognizes "the 'story' as a mode" (Bal, 1991: 209). The narrative mode of reading not only releases the details from their dependence on the text simply as iconographic motifs but it also frees the viewer from the undemanding work involved in

[45] Bal borrows the notion partially from Naomi Schor (1987).

merely being a pursuer of motifs. Iconographic analysis would never fail to point to the sheaf of wheat as the forbidden fruit. Yet it would probably not take the belly button as a motif for analysis. When privileged, such details conducive to narrative reading trigger the story of the interaction between the seer and the seen and the story of the subject's act of looking.

We can generalize this into a theory of looking and suggest that the meaning of a work emanates from the seeing subject who perceives and interprets through historically constructed cultural frames. Therefore, instead of solely putting the image into its historical and cultural context, such a reading situates the viewer and her viewing positions in their multiple cultural frameworks. It is in between these situated sides that the viewer's act of interpretation takes place.

My analysis of the Fall miniature is certainly seized with the inescapable lure of the detail, which may lead one to dismiss the bigger picture, as it were. As Schor constantly warns us, reading in detail does not bring about the truth of an image or a text. It is a guarantor of meaning and "for that very reason [is] constantly threatened by falsification and misprision" (1987: 7). Accordingly, my analysis of the miniature is under constant threat of overinterpretation. In "In Defence of Overinterpretation" (1992), Jonathan Culler argues that "interpretation needs no defence; it is with us always" and that it, "like most intellectual activities," is "interesting only when it is extreme" (110). Such interpretation demonstrates the ways in which oppositions and hierarchies embodied in texts structure the fabric of our social and political lives and our fundamental concepts of identity. In this capacity, my detailed reading of the Fall miniature puts forward not the truth of the myth of the Fall but rather its ambivalences, which underscore the patriarchal narrative.

According to Schor, to focus on the detail is "to become aware […] of its participation in a larger semantic network, bounded on the one side by the *ornamental*, with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the *everyday*, whose 'prosiness' is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over women" (1987: 4). The next chapter looks at an exceptionally marginalized issue within contemporary studies regarding the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting, namely, the representation of women. An eighteenth-century miniature by Abdullah Buharî, one of the examples of the exceedingly rare genre of the nude in Ottoman painting, is discussed via notions of intimacy and the possibility of what I call an "intimate look." I effect as well a dialogue between this material and concepts such as the gaze and the glance, those

theoretical rubrics that have traditionally been considered to be two alternative means of addressing a (nude) painting.

CHAPTER 2: The Intimate Look: Seeing, Touching, and Gazing at the Female Body

In this chapter, I look at an eighteenth-century miniature painting, entitled *Woman bathing in the Hamam*, which has different qualities than those of the other miniatures discussed in this study. It depicts a naked woman sitting on a wooden bench in a Turkish bath. She holds a bowl above her head and pours water as if she has just started washing herself. A large garment covers her knees. Next to her is a round marble basin (*kurna*) filled with water falling from a two-headed brass tap. A grayish, floral-patterned frame surrounds the tap and the niche above the basin.

This miniature falls under the category of what Mieke Bal calls "expository painting," which exposes, lays bare, the body of a female figure (1996, 256). As such, its subject matter sets it apart from the other miniatures I discuss. It shows its female protagonist in a banal, everyday context. In addition, it is a single-leaf miniature that is not conceived as a part of a book. Accordingly, it does not provide a visual representation of a text prefiguring the image, be it a historical account (such as "Sultan Ahmed III's procession" introduced in the third chapter and the "King Timur" miniature discussed in chapter 5) or a religious story (such as "The Fall," analyzed in the previous chapter). In these respects, *Woman bathing in the Hamam* allows me to engage with two interrelated major shifts that emerged in the tradition of miniature painting in the mid-seventeenth century: a growing interest in depicting scenes of ordinary life, and a move away from the material and structural constraints of the book.

The shift towards *genre* painting not only brought everyday scenes to the fore but also put women, who had mostly been excluded from representation under the reign of imperial patriarchy, back in the picture. However, in this chapter I will argue that the representational itinerary of the woman in the *hamam* miniature gives us an even more nuanced story: this miniature is an appropriation of Orientalist images from costume albums produced by European artists, which in turn became a collective blueprint for the works of local miniaturists working outside the imperial atelier. *Woman bathing in the Hamam* appropriates the style and content of these miniatures and blends them, as it were, with the conventions of "courtly" taste. I propose that the appropriation of the Orientalist idiom is made tangible in a contemporary souvenir that bears the reproduction of the miniature with the

superimposed caption “sultan’s address book”—a caption that promotes an Orientalist gaze by locating the miniature within an Orientalist narrative. This reading, stimulated by the added text, engages with the miniature by bringing into play a set of stereotypical images that allegedly constructs the “Oriental woman.” By so doing, the souvenir underlines a potential Orientalist reading that would taint the contemporary viewer’s encounter with the miniature. This mode of looking, in its potentiality, discards the critical transformative potential of works of art by subordinating the miniature to a racial and gendered reading. Such a reading, I contend, entails what Roland Barthes calls “reading the same story everywhere.” As an alternative to such a non-communicative way of reading, Barthes proposes rereading, a process that bears critical and potentially subversive implications, “for it alone saves the text from repetition” (Barthes, S/Z: 15–16; quoted in Boer, 2004: 17). Rereading is a form of play in which we “*immediately* reread the text [….] in order to obtain, as though under the effect of a drug, not the *real* text, but a plural text: the same and new” (Barthes, S/Z: 16; quoted in Boer, 2004: 17).

The new text that accompanies the same old one emerges from the process of what I call an “intimate encounter”—an alternative to the distanced, voyeuristic, and almost rapist reading enabled and indeed encouraged by the Orientalist gaze. In this chapter I will delineate distinct instances of this encounter in which the relation between viewer and image is performed in terms of intimacy. I propose that the miniature encourages a spatial, embodied, haptic, and erotic intimacy that plays on the boundaries between knowing and not-knowing the other’s body. In this capacity, the encounter with the miniature challenges the notion of the intimate as involving a profound knowledge of the other as well as a state of being in oneself, experienced away from the gaze of the others. As such, the miniature, while proposing an intimate look as a mode of engagement, simultaneously encourages us to reconsider the concept of intimacy. Ultimately, I will set in contrast two diverse understanding of the intimate advanced by Gérard Wajcman and Hamid Dabashi and argue that the miniature promotes an instance of intersubjective intimacy in which the image looks back at and touches the viewer.

This chapter thus performs what Inge Boer calls a “palimpsestic reading.” Boer suggests “palimpsestic reading” as a reworking of Barthes’ notion of rereading (2004), stressing that in her use of the metaphor she does not locate “the palimpsest inside the object under consideration, be it visual or textual, but instead in readings

that partially overlap as the process of interpretation is traced" (19). In this sense, the metaphor allows her to "maintain a reading that reads the same story everywhere *in addition to* reading the plural text" (19). Boer's understanding goes beyond Barthes' differentiation between reading and rereading. Boer critiques Barthes' notion and its presupposition that "we can get rid of ourselves of the conventional modes operating during interpretation and turn in an unmediated fashion to the plural text, without being influenced by what is already in us" (19).

I intend to demonstrate in my analysis that once the conventional mode of interpretation and looking in the initial encounter with the image is acknowledged, this gives way to an intimate yet critical assessment of images so as to see "better," up close and yet from a critical distance.

The Fall from the Book: The Woman in the Hamam

A naked woman sits solemnly on a wooden bench (Figure 10). Holding a bowl in her left hand, she pours water over her head while she strokes her hair with her right hand. Her long, straight black hair is loose and has been combed back to reveal the full extent of her face. It falls over her shoulders and reaches her waist. Her fingernails and toenails are painted red, most probably with henna. Her heels are adorned as well with red henna. She wears a jeweled ring, a bracelet, and an armband on her right arm. Her earrings, at least the one on her left ear, match the rest of her ornaments. Compared to her rather large hips, her breasts are small. A blue, shawl-like fabric drapes over her thighs and knees in folds, leaving her shaved genitals visible.

She sits straight in a three-quarter position while keeping her right leg under the left and showing, with such a pose, the sole of her right foot. Following the posture of her torso, her face is turned away from the viewer. She has long black eyebrows, almond eyes, small pink lips, and a stressed chin. Her face is almost expressionless. Her eyes are directed somewhere outside the miniature.
Next to her we see a round marble basin (*kurna*) filled with water falling from the two-headed brass tap. A grayish, floral-patterned frame surrounds the head of the basin. The water that pours out of the tap to be collected in the basin must have been painted silver, which has blackened over time. The floor of the bath is covered with white tiles.

The title of the miniature, *Woman bathing in the Hamam*, tells us that the place is a *hamam*, also known as Turkish bath, a public steam bath. The left corner of the miniature bears the signature of Abdullah Buharî and the year, which is marked 1154 according to the Muslim calendar. This corresponds to 1741-42 in the Gregorian calendar. Buharî worked during the reign of Sultan Mahmut I (r. 1730-1754) and produced miniatures between 1728 and 1745, most of which are single-leaf miniatures. He was a bookbinder by trade, yet gained part of his fame as a miniaturist of single figures of men and women. He also painted floral still-lifes and lacquer landscape paintings on book covers. These paintings are now considered the forerunners of the Ottoman mural landscape compositions which became popular in the later half of the century (Tanındı, 1996: 61; Mahir, 2004: 80). [46]

Comparing the figures of Levnî and Buharî, Renda argues that the latter's renditions convey "more volume, definition, and weight" (Renda, 1995: 65). In her view, "Buharî succeeded in freeing them [figures] from representational prototypes" by "appropriately placing his modeled figures in space" (65-66). Banu Mahir proposes that Buharî may have used a real-life model in making his single-figure miniatures (2004: 80). Although this might have been the case, the miniature is not a portrait of a woman with a known name. She, like the women in other miniatures of Buharî, is an unidentified woman who just happens to be bathing herself.

The anonymity of the depicted figure points at how radically different this miniature is from the rest of the images I analyze here. In contrast to the other miniatures, it is an independent single-leaf miniature that is not bound in a book. In addition, it does not illustrate a story that predates the image. Conventionally, miniatures were parts of books; they were confined by the limits and the structure of the medium and enjoyed a symbiotic relation with the textual.

[46] Some of other miniatures by Buharî are collected in an Album (ca. 1740, IUL, T. 9364) also (Topkapi Museum, H. 2143 Y.Y.1042; Y.Y. 1043). Another single-leaf miniature of Buharî (Topkapi Museum, YY 1086) depicts a semi-erotic love scene. Another copy of the same miniature is in the private collection of Edwin Binney (n. 67).

Figure 10. ***Woman bathing in the Hamam*****, Abdullah Buharî, 1741-2, single-leaf miniature, Topkapi Museum, (H.Y.Y. 1043), 16.2x10.8 cm.**

The intimate relationship between the miniature and the book was broken in the early seventeenth century when artists began increasingly to paint miniatures as stand-alone works rather than to create them as illustrations for books (And, 1987: 97). Even though these single miniatures gained a certain autonomy from the book, they nonetheless retained the dimensions of the page. Additionally, such single miniatures were compiled in albums called *murakka*, in which they "could be more easily and more exclusively enjoyed than miniatures which are a part of a larger whole or manuscript" (And, 1987: 97). I suggest that these albums demonstrate an attempt to keep these miniatures, by now semi-autonomous, within the traditional order of the book. Even though they are not taken from albums, two miniatures discussed in this study confirm that such efforts were made. As it was initially conceived, the miniature "The Expulsion of Adam and Eve," analyzed in the previous chapter, was not meant to be part of a book. However, together with other miniatures, it was later bound in the book *Falname*. Likewise, the portrait of Sultan Ahmed III discussed in Chapter 4 was executed as an independent single-leaf miniature. The miniatures of the *Kebir Musavver Silsilename*, from which the portrait is taken from, were completed before the poet Munib wrote the book's text in the nineteenth century (Irepoğlu, 1999: 78; 2000: 380). Such collections operated as a means of controlling the viewer's encounter with the miniature by subordinating it to a regime of reading.

The woman in the *hamam* miniature, however, is not bound as most of the single-leaf miniatures were. The miniature is mounted on a cardboard sheet ornamented with marbling (*ebru*). In this respect, it does away with the structural confines of the book and exists as an independent image in its own right. Because it is easily transportable, the viewer's position is not strictly defined in advance. It is also free from the textual framing set in place by a literary source, as there is no readily apparent textual counterpart that could explain the work. A miniature's traditional function was to visually explain certain aspects of a literary story or a historical event; accordingly, the text enabled the viewer to identify the figures as specific people or characters from history or literature. However, such close proximity of word and image does not mean that miniatures simply illustrated the text. As Bal suggests, each image overwrites the previous text (1991: 34). I would like to transcribe Bal's arguments to the realm of miniature painting and argue that miniatures are not "a retelling of the text but a use of it; not an illustration but,

ultimately, a new text" that proposes for "the viewer's consideration a propositional content, an argument, an idea, inscribed in line and color, by means of representation" (Bal, 1991: 34-35). Yet, as Bal notes, reading the image without the words can lead to hilariously erroneous interpretations. Therefore, she suggests, "text and image, even when presented as a whole, do not match, do not overlap; they can neither do with nor do without each other" (34).

The chapter entitled "I am a Tree" from Orhan Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red* (1998) illustrates the complex relationship between word and image as it manifested itself in miniature painting. In this chapter, the image of a tree "hastily sketched onto nonsized, rough paper" tells the story of how it fell out of an illustrated manuscript prepared for Sultan Ibrahim Mirza and found its way to Istanbul, where it was used as a wall prop by a master storyteller. "As a tree, I need not be part of a book," the tree contends, then adds: "As the picture of a tree, however, I'm disturbed that I'm not a page within some manuscript" (57). The tree believes that it should have been part of a story but since it fell "like a leaf in autumn" it does not know to which story it might have belonged. It says:

> I know nothing about the page I've fallen from. My request is that you look at me and ask: "Were you perhaps meant to provide shade for Mejnun disguised as a shepherd as he visited Leyla in her tent?" or "Were you meant to fade into the night, representing the darkness in the soul of a wretched and hopeless man?" [….] I would've wanted to shade Alexander during the final moments of his life on his campaign to conquer Hindustan as he dies from a persistent nosebleed brought on by sunstroke [….] Ah, to which story was I meant to add meaning and grace? (59).

The humble tree concludes its story by thanking Allah that it has not been drawn in the new "decadent" style that follows that of the Frank painters: "Not because I fear that if I'd been thus depicted all the dogs in Istanbul would assume I was a real tree and piss on me: I don't want to be a tree, I want to be its meaning" (61). Extending the metaphor of the fall used by Pamuk, we may consider the miniature of the woman in *hamam* as enacting a fall from the book, and doing so without any anticipation of returning home. As the tree makes clear, the fall from the book is not merely material but is, above all, a textual fall. If the woman in the *hamam* could

speak, she could just as well wonder which story she belonged to, if in fact she belonged to any story at all. Perhaps *Woman bathing in the Hamam* was used as a wall prop just as Pamuk's tree was supposed to have been. In the absence of any documentation—historical and scholarly alike—concerning the miniature of Buharî, we cannot assess the ways in which this woman in the *hamam* was originally conceived and consumed.[47]

Even though we cannot definitively know the ways in which the miniature was appropriated in its original context, it is plausible to argue that the miniature falls under the category of genre painting that emerged in the mid-seventeenth century. Genre-painting images not only displayed scenes of everyday life but also brought representations of women into the picture. I shall propose that this new style of painting, although it may not be able to provide *Woman bathing in the Hamam* with a "correct" textual reference, nonetheless provides a story that can help us contextualize the miniature.

The Return of the Everyday: Putting the Woman in the Picture

In her book *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems* (2001), Fatima Mernissi wonders about the identity of women painted by Muslim men in miniatures (167). She concentrates on the case of Shirin, the female protagonist of the story of Persian origin *Khusraw* and *Shirin*, found in poems of *Shahnama* by Fuzuli. Shirin was one of the most popular literary heroines depicted by Ottoman miniaturists, taking her place alongside Leila, Huma, and the other female characters (often notorious) from religious stories such as Eve, Mary, the mother and daughters of the Prophet Mohammed, Belquis (the Queen of Sheba), and Zuleikha (Potiphar's wife).

However when we inquire into the works dealing with Ottoman history, one of the major fields in which figural illustration played an important role, there seems to be a gendered gap. For instance, the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, discussed in the next chapter, neglect to show royal women in circumcision festivities, even

[47] In fact, Banu Mahir argues that a few miniatures from the seventeenth century were used for what she calls "picture recitation." (1999). This coincides with Irepoğlu's suggestion that the single-leaf miniatures of Levnî might have been used for such recitations for the sultan (1999: 168).

though they include (though scarcely) common women.[48] This absence, however, is not incidental. As Gülru Necipoğlu states, "official Ottoman historians mostly avoided the subject of women," as "the central figure of their narratives was always the sultan" (1991: 159). As the power to be represented was always considered to be male, imperial women were conceived through "concepts of privacy and propriety." Consequently, the miniatures that illustrated official Ottoman history texts "concentrated on the royal image of the sultan and his male court and, with very few exceptions, omitted women, who had no part to play in public court ceremonies" (159).[49]

In the seventeenth century, the depiction of women figures increased, as miniaturists working outside of the imperial atelier often depicted the everyday lives of ordinary people. Günsel Renda suggests that the expansion of themes represented after the seventeenth century "brought about a change in figural representation," as miniaturists "became aware that subjects other than the activities of the sultans or their martial victories could also be rendered in miniatures" (1995: 64). She adds that the female figure, "rarely encountered in previous centuries, had now became a subject in its own right" (64).[50] In fact, in the eighteenth century, the female figure became well-established in the works of Levnî and Buharî. Levnî prepared an album (Topkapi Museum, H. 2164) consisting of "male and female figures exhibiting various costumes in elegant poses; drinking while reclining, combing their hair, playing musical instruments, and binding their turbans" (Renda, 1995: 65). Similarly, Buharî's works were collected in an album (IUL T.9364) that brought together various miniatures of single female figures dressed in the garments of their time.[51]

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[48] In order to compensate, or better, to further emphasize this gendered exclusion the headquarters of the Archers Guild, which hosted the women of the seraglio during the festivities, is depicted right above the imperial tents in the beginning of the visual account (Folio 10b and 12b). These buildings testify to a wider and disquieting representational absence in the tradition of miniature painting of the womenfolk of the palace.

[49] Even though royal women were mainly absent from the representations of public rituals, a few of the depictions of *majlis* (a gathering that takes place in a garden or terrace, for the sheer pleasure of conversing together) in the palace showed female figures as entertainers and musicians (Micklewright, 1997).

[50] The style and the subject of these miniatures were brought into the Ottoman palace with the compilation of single-paged miniatures in the so-called "Album of Ahmed I" (Topkapi Museum, B408) (And, 2002: 373). The album, brought together by *Kalender Pasha*, who also assembled the miniatures of the *Falname* discussed in the previous chapter, consists of miniatures depicting different instances of Ottoman everyday life taking place within house interiors, bazaars, and *hamam* buildings.

[51] See Mahir (1998) for a discussion of the ways in which Buharî's works can be read as reflecting the

According to Metin And, both artists were "devotees of the cult of the female breast" and represented women with "half-exposed breasts, of which the only purpose is obviously to increase the appeal of the nude" (1987: 15). As And argues, in spite of the excessive prudery of Ottoman society, the tradition of miniature painting included erotic and nudist themes (14). He explains that the consumption of miniatures was a private matter, thus allowing an underground circulation of books such as *bahnames* that included numerous illustrations of positions of intercourse.[52] Sultans "could own or commission such works without challenge from anyone and regardless of courtly prejudice, since the Ottoman Sultan was at the same time Caliph, that is the leader of all Islamic world" (14). Similarly, outside the court, "patrons could conceal illustrated manuscripts in the privacy of their houses" (14).

While semi-pornographic images enjoyed an underground popularity, miniatures depicting naked bodies and erotic themes were widely established by the eighteenth century. Metin And adduces two factors that facilitated the endorsement of such images. The first has to do with the subject matter of the miniatures to be illustrated. Poems and stories on themes of love and religion sometimes necessitated and justified the depiction of nakedness.[53] Second, And suggests that by the late seventeenth century, Ottoman society had become more liberal and permissive, and held "a new awareness of a life of luxury and dalliance, and the appealing treatment of the female form became a common artistic skill of many eighteenth-century miniaturists" (14). Similarly, Tülay Artan suggests that widespread transformations in Ottoman society were reflected in the miniatures that display "women with décolleté dresses entertaining themselves in the presence of men in intimate [*mahrem*] spaces from baths [*hamam*] to houses" (1993: 92). However, this does not mean that naked figures did not exist prior to the seventeenth century. Metin And notes that in addition to the few extent nude miniatures from the earlier periods, more

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fashion of the century.

[52] The word *Bahname* is originally Arabic: *bah* means "coitus, lust, concupiscence, desire, libido" and "sexually related" and *name* means "book," hence "Book of (Sexually-related Subjects)"—or Book of Sexology. These types of books (which contain recipes for aphrodisiacs, recommendations for sexual health, contraceptive measures, and positions of intercourse) became especially popular in Istanbul during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

[53] The expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise (see Chapter 1) and Khusraw spying on Shirin bathing are two such stories that were represented in miniatures over the centuries.

might still exist if only they had not been "destroyed by fanatical puritans, or even by the owners themselves" (1987: 14).

An additional factor causing the propagation of the female figure, be it naked or not, in art was the fashion of costume albums. These albums consisted of single figures depicting diverse prototypes drawn from different strata of Ottoman society. The production of such albums was triggered by a growing demand from European customers who were interested in Ottoman cultures of attire. Initially, they were "produced by European painters coming to Turkey but were later executed by local artists as well" (Renda, 1995: 65). The major manufacturers of such albums were the so-called bazaar painters, who produced miniatures for private customers in their own workshops.[54] Because their works were market-oriented, these artists were encouraged by the demands of their customers to experiment and break out of the rigorous imperial limitations regarding which subjects could be depicted; this new context enabled everyday scenes to infiltrate the visual idiom. These miniaturists drew on established pictorial modes developed by European painters in the sixteenth century so as to make their works more appealing to their European customers. Interestingly, as epitomized by the two eighteenth-century manuscripts entitled *Hamse-i Atayi* and *Hubânnâme and Zenânnâme*, among others, the imperial atelier appropriated the new language and style of the bazaar artists.

It can be argued that the woman in the *hamam* miniature carries the traces of this double influence, as the work seems to follow the style of costume albums produced for European travelers who bought these albums as souvenirs of their visits to the Ottoman Empire. A miniature from a seventeenth-century costume album, now in the collection of the British Museum (1928, 0323.046), can be considered the precedent of the miniature in question (f.134b [121]). According to Norah M. Titley, this painting depicts the interior of a *hamam* where a woman is seated on a stool washing her hair at a basin. Adorned with bracelets and a necklace, she is unclothed except for a towel draped over her knees. There are two brass taps with water running out of them. (Titley, 1981: 7). This "bazaar" miniature, which is one of the first miniatures to depict a woman in the *hamam*, might have inspired Buharî's *hamam* scene. [55]

[54] The term "bazaar painter" was coined by Metin And (1985; 2002: 15-17).

[55] Bağci, Çağman, and Renda make a similar argument (2006: 273).

Leslie Meral Schick argues that costume books appealed to Europeans because they functioned as "guidebook[s] to Ottoman society," which had become "paradigmatic of the 'other.'" As the representative of the other, the Ottomans and their habits needed to be "documented" and "domesticated" (1999: 626-27). Another seventeenth-century costume album held in the British Museum (BM, 1974, 0617.013), entitled *A briefe relation of the Turckes, their Kings, Emperors or Grandsigneurs their conquests, religion, customes, habbits at Constantinople, etc*, explains the documentary function of the costume albums (Sinemoğlu, 1996: 172). The manuscript, probably executed by a bazaar artist, includes miniatures depicting various imperial and common-folk figures and could have been used as a blueprint for the album in question. It bears the initials P.M., giving the impression that it was produced for the traveler and author Peter Mundy. His comments on *A briefe relation of the Turckes* prove the authentic documentary value of such albums. He wrote: "For the several habits at Constantinople, where most officers and Nations are distinguished by their habits, I have a little book, only of that particular, painted by the Turcks themselves in anno 1618, although no great art therein, yet enough to satisfy concerning that walter" (Sinemoğlu, 1996: 172).[56]

As Mundy's account attests, miniatures produced by local artists exerted the authority of authenticity. Even though they were not regarded as great art as Europeans knew it, they were good enough to satisfy, at least visually, the curiosity of their beholders. The genealogy of the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature—its being influenced by the work of a bazaar artist who replicated the style and the content of the early European costume albums—demonstrates that the themes that intrigued European viewers and invited their gazes ultimately became appealing to the Ottomans themselves. In this capacity, the woman in the *hamam* miniature can be considered an "Oriental" appropriation of the Orientalist gaze that was directed upon the Ottoman Empire as a paradigmatic instance of the other.

Most of the costume albums are now kept in different European museums and continue to gratify the museumgoer's gaze. Nowadays, contemporary souvenirs seem to fulfill their authentic function of satisfying the tourist's curiosity. I suggest

[56] For more on the book in question see Bağci, Çağman, and Renda (2006: 235-236).

that one such souvenir, bearing the reproduction of the woman in the *hamam* miniature, helps us to locate where the miniature might "fall" from the book.

The Sultan's Souvenir

Figure 11.The Address Book.

The story of the fallen tree reminds us that the destination of some images might end up being severely different than what their creators had intended for them. The woman in the *hamam* miniature takes a path that is by no means less adventurous than that of Pamuk's tree. Consider this reproduction of the miniature mounted on the cover of an address book, which can be purchased in any souvenir shop in Istanbul (Figure 11). In the contemporary market for tourist souvenirs, reproductions abound of miniature paintings used in such a way; they seem to reinstate for the contemporary tourist the function of previous keepsakes, such as costume albums.[57] They operate as "authentic" objects reminiscent of a past exotic experience in the "heart" of the former Ottoman Empire, the seat of the Orient. In this respect, the

[57] I came across this address book at the Topkapi Museum's retail store during my research. It is worth noting that the miniature in question is not on display at the museum but rather kept in the museum library—like almost all the illustrated manuscripts—which is not open for public visits unless one has the right documentation for research provided by the Ministry of Culture. In the absence or invisibility of the originals, it is through souvenirs, such as calendars, postcards and bookmarks, that the miniatures gain public visibility. I have presented two papers on the function of such souvenirs on two occasions: *The Thought of the Eye*, organized by the International Visual Sociology Association, in San Francisco, USA, in August 2004, and *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, held in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, in May 2006.

address book is far from being an innocent commercial product. Rather, it is a theoretical object, provoking questions as to how the contemporary viewer might exert her own constructed vision upon the miniature. I have suggested that the miniature is a local appropriation of Orientalist images. The souvenir makes this link quite obvious by its caption, "Sultan's address book." It proposes that the sultan is the ultimate possessor of the notebook, the miniature, and the woman in the image. Additionally, the caption juxtaposes the position of the sultan with that of its potential owner. As such, the souvenir lays bare not only the woman's body but also a latent Orientalist gaze that informs the contemporary viewer's encounter with the miniature. [58]

As is well known, in *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said discusses discursive productions that constitute the Orient as a discrete geographical, racial, political, cultural and economic entity so as to reveal the discriminatory assumptions and ideological investments that inform them. He states that, as a discourse, Orientalism does not have a definite origin. "Every writer on the Orient [….] assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies" (20). Belatedly, the souvenir participates in the tradition of pictorial Orientalism and reproduces a discourse in which gender, race, and power ovelap in a complex manner.[59] Malek Alloula suggests that nineteenth-century colonial postcards, which display Algerian women who were unveiled by force, are not simple souvenirs but instead are "the poor man's phantasm." They are "everywhere, covering all the colonial space, immediately available to the tourist," producing stereotypes "in the manner of great seabirds producing guano" that fertilize the colonial vision (1986: 4).

Even though the "Sultan's address book" operates in a different context than that governing the colonial postcards, I suggest that it nonetheless seems to fulfill the function of the previous colonial souvenirs, albeit with a contemporary twist. In her book *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (2001), Susan Stewart argues that a souvenir involves the displacement of

[58] As the caption is written in English, we may assume that the address book targets mainly, albeit not exclusively, the "occidental" tourist.

[59] For the articulation of sexual and cultural difference produced and signified in the discourse of Orientalism as constitutive of "Occidental" subjectivity, see Meyda Yeğenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

attention into the past by enveloping the present within the past (151). Though capable of such a temporal transformation, the souvenir is always incomplete, as it is an allusion to a "now-distanced experience" which it "can only evoke and resonate to, and can never entirely recoup" (136). Incomplete in itself, the souvenir requires an accompanying narrative furnished by its possessor to fill in that which is missing. It is a point of origin for a subjective narrative that fills in the void between past and present (136).

Similarly, the cover of the Sultan's address book initiates a subjective narrative, but not because it enables its hypothetical possessor to recollect having been in Istanbul or at the Topkapi Palace. Rather, it is a theoretical souvenir, invoking a particular narrative to fill in that *which is missing*, namely, the missing story of the woman in the *hamam*. As in the case of the literal souvenir, the invoked narrative belongs not to the object but to the beholder; and what is exhorted is the story of the Orientalist gaze.

From the Orientalist Gaze …

In her groundbreaking essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), Laura Mulvey sketches out the ways in which gender and power operate in narrative cinema by dwelling on the notion of the gaze.[60] For Mulvey, "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female," a division that gives the male subject the capacity to cast a voyeuristic look (1989: 19). Women, on the other hand, perform "their traditional exhibitionist role" in which they are "simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (1989: 19). This schema imposes the male gaze as a mode of looking that objectifies, reifies, and dominates the female body.[61]

[60] The notion of the gaze is a much-traveled concept in the humanities. For its itinerary, see Norman Bryson's introduction to *Looking in: The Art of Viewing*, and Mieke Bal's chapter "Concept" in *Traveling Concepts*.

[61] Mulvey's account discards the possibility of the female spectator's pleasure in looking. Mary Ann Doane develops an understanding of the female gaze overlooked in Mulvey, suggesting that to gain the necessary distance for voyeuristic pleasure (the male experience in film viewing), the female spectator constructs a "masquerade of femininity," which is an excess of feminine traits adopted to distance her from the filmic image and avoid to over-identification. See Mary Ann Doane (1982).

Norman Bryson suggests that even though Mulvey's account concerned the positioning of the movie spectator, it "answered exactly to the growing awareness of gender as primary dimension of social life and of visual representation" in art-historical inquiry into spectatorship (2001: 7). Simultaneously, her arguments on voyeurism, objectification, fetishism, and scopophilia, articulating the woman as the object of male pleasure and bearer of male lack, have received a great deal of criticism. According to Bal, this model of voyeurism "tends to reduce looking to power only, to an absolute subject-object relation, wherein the viewer/receiver has total power and the object of the look does not even participate in the communication" (1996: 262).[62]

In her effort to develop a communicative model in the realm of painting, in which images would "speak back" to the viewer, Bal appropriates Bryson's differentiation between the gaze and glance developed in *Vision and Painting* (1983). The gaze is the look that fails to recognize the work of representation. It takes what is seen as the "real" thing. As such, "the work of art disappears behind the object represented" (Bal, 1992: 142). In this mode of looking, the viewing subject disembodies and ahistoricizes herself, and she objectifies, controls, and fixes the work of art. As opposed to the gaze, the glance is a mode of viewing anchored in the body, temporality, and desire. Accordingly, it recognizes the representational character of the work of art. Rather than being a fixating, mastering look, the glance has a "flickering, ungovernable mobility" that disunites and decomposes the image (Bryson, 1983: 121).

However, these two modes of looking should not be conceived as either mutually exclusive or culturally specific.[63] As Bal proposes, they are "viewing attitudes or modes proposed, encouraged, but not enforced, by the work" (1991: 142). Even though they can be taken up alternatively before the same work or combined within the same looking-event, the choice between one mode or the other is not totally arbitrary: "the actual viewer is addressed by positions offered for identification" (143).

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[62] This non-communicative model has been challenged by feminist art historians who underlined the instances when the "nudes" intervened and negated the patriarchal tradition of the nude by challenging, resisting, and reverting the male gaze.

[63] Bryson suggests that the glance, as a mode of viewing, has been suppressed by the gaze, which according to him is the logic of western oil painting. The Japanese ink painting, in contrast, invites the glance as a mode of engagement with the image (1988).

The tradition of Orientalist painting invited the gaze as the position in which identification was enforced. As Linda Nochlin contends, the genre of Orientalist painting put forward two ideological assumptions about power: "one about men's power over women; the other about white men's superiority to, hence justifiable control over, inferior, darker races" (1991: 45). In these paintings, "the (male) viewer was invited sexually to identify with, yet morally distance himself from, his Oriental counterparts depicted within the objectively inviting yet racially distancing space of the painting" (45). The discourse of transparent realism was one way of securing this distance. According to Nochlin, Jean-Léon Gérôme's Orientalist oeuvre "tries to make us forget that his art is really art, both by concealing the evidence of his touch, and, at the same time, by insisting on a plethora of authenticating details, especially on what might be called unnecessary ones" (1989: 38) The attempt to suppress the work of representation and the application of excessive details were both directed toward displaying the real Orient and the Oriental woman according to "the needs of the absent and controlling Western viewer" (Lewis, 1996: 112). These paintings helped to map the Orient visually by exposing the sexually objectified feminine body as the most prominent signifier of the oriental otherness, made available for the reification, fixation, and intrusion of the voyeuristic male gaze.[64]

I propose that the caption "Sultan's address book," superimposed on the image of the woman from the *hamam* miniature, initiates and encourages an Orientalist reading and subsumes it under the reign of the Orientalist gaze. As any title would, the caption frames the image in a certain manner. It is an "epistemological indication" that carries "circumstantial evidence" (Boer, 2004: 79). The word "sultan" evokes a whole array of stereotypical images of the figure of the despot that was dominant for centuries in Western representations of the Orient.[65] As imagined, this figure provoked fear and terror in those around him, and he was given the unrestricted earthly pleasures of his harem, the secluded space where the women who were allegedly in his possession resided. The caption on the miniature creates a direct relation between the figure of the sultan and the woman from the miniature,

[64] However, these paintings, as any other, are not homogenous artifacts offering only one potential way of reading. Rather, they are tainted by multiple ambivalences. In *Disorienting Vision* (2004), Inge Boer focuses on the semiotic plurality intrinsic in French Orientalist texts and images by addressing them from the position of the glance.

[65] See Boer (2004: 27-48).

who is subordinated to being his possession.[66] Drawing out the implications of the title, we may argue that the sultan not only "addresses" the woman in the *hamam*, it encourages her identification as an Ottoman woman from the imperial harem.

As I noted earlier, the most significant figure of Orientalist images—such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's *La Bain Turc* (1862), Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Un Bain Maure - Femme Turque au Bain* (1870), *Scène de Bain* (1881), *Le Bain des Femmes* (1889), *Le Bain de Vapeur* (1889), *Allumeuse de Narghilé* (1889), *Bain Maure* (1880-5), *Les Baigneuses du Harem* (1901), and Jean-Jules-Antoine Lecomte du Nouy's *L'Esclave Blanche* (1888)—was the exotic exoticized Oriental woman. Within this tradition, the depiction of the harem, and in particular the figure of the odalisque, occupied a special place: a genre within the genre. As Boer notes, the odalisque "comes to stand for the harem of which she is considered part and parcel through a metonymical relation of substitution of many for one" (2004: 6). Similarly, Reina Lewis argues that even though European Orientalism was a heterogeneous phenomenon, the "cult of the harem was central to the fantasies that structure Orientalist discourse" (1996: 111). Various representations of the harem reinforced two main trajectories: "the fulfillment of seeing the forbidden faces and bodies of Muslim women; and the fantasy of one man's sexual ownership over many women" (112). Accordingly, the emblem of feminine space in the Orientalist imagination was the Turkish bath, which served as the site for the unveiling and the sexualization of the odalisque wherein she was revealed as the lavish and voluptuous Oriental woman *par excellence*.

The setting of the miniature, though devoid of excessive detail to feed the imagination, provides the viewer with signs that encourage the reading of the scene as taking place in an Oriental bath. The marble basin, the floral ornamentation around its upper frame, the jewelry of the woman, henna tattoos on her feet, and the colorfully patterned drapery might all be read as synecdoches of the Orient. These indexical signs specify a certain location and offer the viewer ways to recognize the painting. They lead her "towards … initial acknowledgement, to subscribe to an a priori set-up in the act of interpretation" and recognize the scene not as a regular bath

[66] Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827) refers (via Byron) to the ancient Assyrian ruler Sardanapalus who, upon perceiving the inevitability of defeat in battle, destroyed all his possessions and had all his wives and mistresses killed so that they would not fall into the hands of the enemy. The women in this painting are just that—possessions. See Boer (2004) and Nochlin (1989).

but as the Turkish bath (Boer, 2004: 79). This reading of the miniature is neither natural nor neutral. It is conditioned by an a priori set-up produced by European illustrated travel accounts, etchings, engravings, paintings, and sketches—constructing what Nochlin called the "imaginary Orient" (1989). These diverse images produce a visual discourse of the Orient, not necessarily directing and dominating but nonetheless informing the contemporary viewer's gaze.

I suggest that the caption of the souvenir invites such an intertextual reading of the miniature and subordinates it to an Orientalist gaze, which turns the woman into an odalisque in the exoticized space of the *hamam*. The viewer intervenes in this snug, intimate atmosphere without the woman being aware of it as she turns away from the spectator. T. J. Clark argues that a nude "could hardly be said to do its work as a painting at all if it did not find a way to address the spectator and give him access to the body on display" (1985: 132). According to Clark, in many nude paintings "this was sometimes done simply by looking: by having the woman's eyes and face, and her whole body, address themselves to the viewer" (132). However, the act of *not* looking at the viewer is also a powerful way of inviting him or her into the image. The woman in the *hamam* has her dreamy eyes affixed somewhere outside the image; she is entirely unaware of the viewer's presence while she bathes. She seems as if she is lost in her own thoughts and too busy with herself to be bothered by any distraction. This self-contained attitude invites the viewer to adopt a peeping-tom position. The voyeur can stand in front of the image and stare at the woman's body, which is exposed to the spectator without any visual obstruction. She will not notice the gaze of the viewer, let alone be disturbed by it.

The miniature depicts little more than the basin and the nude to reflect upon. The viewer is thus given the opportunity to concentrate on the nakedness of the woman. Her smooth and white skin fondles, so to speak, the viewer's gaze. Her small breasts, rendered with pink overtones, and her broad hips emphasize her voluptuousness. The garment that drops over her legs exposes her genitals in such a way that gives the impression that it has just fallen down so as to leave them bare. Since her genitals are devoid of pubic hair, her labia, marked with a pink scratch, are laid bare for the gaze of the viewer. As John Berger suggests, in the European visual tradition the convention of not painting the hair of a woman's body appeals to the male viewer. It enhances his sexuality by minimizing the woman's sexual passion so that the spectator may feel that he has a monopoly on such passion (Berger, 1977:

55). Similarly, the hairless genitals diminish any potential sexual threat that the nude might present and transfer such potentiality to the viewer. In addition, they give visual access to the intrusion of the gaze and invite the viewer inside the woman's body.

If we keep in mind the Orientalist narrative I introduced earlier, the potential voyeur of this bath scene is none other than the Sultan himself. He catches a glimpse of the woman as if the door of the *hamam* has been left ajar to invite his gaze. The viewer identifies not only with the Sultan's point of view but also his position, as suggested by the caption of the address book. The woman is not just bathing but cleaning herself for the sultan and, by extension, for the viewer's potential visual penetration. The deep dark(ened) hole of the basin and the black aperture on its head encourage such a visual intercourse. Moreover, the water falling from the phallic-handled tap intensifies the almost rapist gaze of the viewer.

This reading of the miniature as a theoretical souvenir fills in the void left by the absence of a prefiguring text by recalling stereotypical Orientalist notions and putting them in conjunction with a possessive, intrusive, and almost rapist mode of gazing. The textual intervention triggers this reading and invites the viewer to come to terms with a latent Orientalist gaze that informs her act of looking. As Bal would argue, such a reading of the miniature for the male gaze is based on non-communication (1996: 262). It imposes preexisting paradigms of looking on the miniature without acknowledging its singularity. It insists on seeing "the same story everywhere," to recall Barthes' argument about the process of reading.

Letting the artwork look back entails a process of relooking that goes beyond the recognition of what one already thinks and knows. Such an engagement brings about an intimate relation between the viewer and the image seen. This does not mean, as Boer reminds us, that the Orientalist reading and the gaze as a mode of addressing should be erased from the process of interpretation. Rereading, or relooking, involves casting a different look at the image to see its difference. I propose that to see the alterity of the miniature, the viewer should engage in what I call an "intimate encounter." In what follows, I discuss the ways in which such an encounter unleashes the transformative potential of the miniature.

… to the Intimate Look

According to the *OED*, "intimacy" has five distinct meanings: close familiarity; a euphemism for sexual intercourse; closeness of observation or knowledge; close connection or union; and the inner or inmost nature, an inward quality or feature. In this sense, the relation I propose is blatantly opposed to one of distance, both in the physical and cognitive senses of the word. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, the encounter with the miniatures requires getting physically close to them because of their relatively small size. In addition, the book as a medium calls for a spatial closeness. Such proximity is accompanied by intellectual and psychological closeness, as the viewer is encouraged to scrutinize the image. This closeness of looking, however, does not give rise to a conventionally possessive and intrusive viewing process. On the contrary, as Catherine Lord suggests, "the adjective 'intimate' nuances the noun relevant to the terms of friendship," in which "each party develops a profound knowledge of the other, even if this should lead to disagreement, or require a compromise of positions" (1999: 6). According to Lord, one of the forerunners of such an intimate process occurs in Plato's *Phaedrus*, "in which both member of the dialogue shift position; each enables the interlocutor the opportunity to re-produce the idea and opinions of the other in a re-invented form" (6). Similarly, the intimate look purports to be a process in which the viewer participates in a dialogue with the image so as to think along with the artwork.

I propose that the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature produces, represents, and exposes intimacy and calls for an intimate look as a strategy for visual analysis. It does so on different, yet interconnected levels. It depicts an intimate space; exposes the body as the locus of the intimate; encourages an erotic and haptic look; and invites the viewer to see the innermost parts of the miniature without ever letting her "in" the woman's body. Ultimately, the encounter enables us to reevaluate the notion of intimacy, moving it from "the state of being with oneself" toward an intersubjective state of "being alone with the other."

As I mentioned above, the title of the miniature tells us that the woman is situated in the *hamam*. Even though the title is based on an art-historical interpretation, it is plausible that the space is indeed a Turkish bath, since in the eighteenth century, Ottoman houses did not have private bathrooms. However, contrary to both Mernissi's image of the *hamam* as a public space, "often overrun

with dozens of noisy children" (2001: 102), and nineteenth-century depictions of the *hamam* as a crowded space where women eat, smoke, and dance, the scene depicted in the miniature is rather serene.[67] It includes a marble basin and a wooden bench on which the woman is seated by herself. The wall in the background is painted in a pale hue. Similarly, the tiled floor is a plain white surface. The interior does not all resemble those scenes of imagined ostentation in which the interior of an Ottoman *hamam* would be richly decorated and ornamented.

Additionally, instead of the spacious and luminous space of a *hamam*, the miniature brings forth a clearly limited and almost claustrophobically framed interior. If anything, the space looks like an undersized bathroom. The attentive viewer might be taken by the slender line of dark grayish paint applied at the very bottom of the miniature plane. This line looks as if the marble ground was slightly elevated at the exact place where it was cut by the frame. This elevation from the ground turns the tiled floor into a platform or stage-like structure. Alternatively, it prompts the idea that the ground actually terminates precisely where it has been framed. Hence we may argue that the space depicted is a separate small room rather than the publicly occupied section of the *hamam*.[68]

In fact, traditional *hamam* buildings included private bathing cubicles called *halvet* where one could bathe in seclusion. As the miniature gives no clue as to which part of the *hamam* it depicts, we can read the abruptly cut floor as an indication of such a private cubicle. The frame of the miniature designates the side walls, ceiling, and the floor of the room, while its surface overlaps with that of the location of the doorstep. By presenting the space in this way, the miniature places the viewer at the threshold of the cubicle. *Halvet* is an Arabic word meaning withdrawal into seclusion, isolation, and retirement. In esoteric Islamic traditions, such as Sufism, the notion of *halvet* refers to the practice of making a forty-day solitary retreat as a way of coming to a mystical experience of the divine. Even though such connotations

[67] In two different copies of *Fazil Husayn*'s *Zenânnâme* (IUL, T5502 c.1793 and BL, Or. 7094, c. 1776), there are two similar miniatures that represent a crowded *hamam* scene in which women are served coffee, wash each other's hair, and chat. Mahir argues that these works were inspired by the costume albums prepared by European painters working in the Pera district of Istanbul (2004: 81).

[68] A typical *hamam*, mostly divided into separate sections for men and women, consists of three interconnected basic rooms: the *sıcaklık* (or *hararet* -*caldarium*), which is the hot room; the warm room (*tepidarium*), which is the intermediate room; and the *soğukluk*, which is the cool room. In addition there are private rooms reserved for individual use.

cannot be strictly attributed to bathing cubicles, these spaces were reserved for the solitary experience of washing oneself, away from the gaze of the others. In this capacity, the *halvet* room is the domain of the intimate, encircled by the publicly available space of the *hamam*.

In *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Gaston Bachelard investigates poetic images of what he calls the "felicitous space." These spaces "we love" are more than just places of physical safety; they are places of our own where we retire to. According to Bachelard, the house image is the *locus classicus* of "intimate space," which "would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being" (xxxvi). It is "one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind" of which binding principle is the daydream (6). By "remembering 'houses' and 'rooms,' we learn to 'abide' within ourselves" (xxxvii).[69]

Even though Bachelard seems to privilege the image of the house as the realm of the intimate, the isolated *halvet* room might be seen as an intimate space where one can dwell in oneself.[70] I propose that the posture of the woman suggests an intimate experience of the sort in which one abides in oneself. She seems to have just entered the room; she has sat down and has allowed the garment with which she was covering her body outside of the *halvet* fall down over her knees, and then has taken the bowl and has just begun pouring its water. As if performing a ritual, she holds the bowl gently and lets the water sink in while stroking her hair. Her face is expressionless, bearing no sign of emotion; she looks as if she is immersed in herself and in her thoughts. The lack of expression, And notes, is an aesthetic feature of the miniature tradition that stems from "the suppression of interest in character and expressiveness" that was consciously sought by the artists (1987: 103). The faces in miniatures "show a complete indifference: no scowl, no smile or grief, not even a wrinkle" (103). In opposition to And's negative understanding, Sayin argues that the absence of facial expression is a way of screening the figure's inner world hidden behind her face (2003: 60). The face should be kept indifferent, signifying as it does

[69] While Bachelard's notion of the "felicitous space" and reverie has feminine overtones, his conceptualization of the image of the house has been criticized as reflecting the perspective of the privileged upper-class white male.

[70] Certainly, modern differentiation between private and public space does not correspond to the ways in which space was experienced and imagined in Ottoman society. For a general discussion of the ways in which the distinction between the public and the private has been played out in eighteenth-century Ottoman society, see Artan (1993).

the incorporeal qualities of the body (60). It is for this reason, she contends, that even the most pornographic miniatures, such as those found in the *bahnames*, never give away the faces of the figures even though they depict bodies completely naked (60). They expose everything but the faces so as to keep the intimate away from the gaze of the viewer.

In this respect, the inexpressive face of the bathing woman can be read as a screen that repels the viewer's gaze. Simultaneously, this face invites witness of a moment of intimacy, when one becomes submerged in oneself while daydreaming in solitude under the governance of what Bachelard calls "the being inhabiting our still waters" (1968: 60). Could it be that the woman experiences an instance in which one retreats fully to the intimacy within oneself, to those deepest thoughts or feelings concerning one's inmost self? Even if this is so, the viewer is not encouraged to participate, as the face of the woman gives away nothing but the sign of experiencing an intimate moment on her own.

So far I have sketched two instances of the ways in which the intimate encounter operates: the reading of the miniature as depicting the privacy of a *hamam* cubicle that is reserved for solitary withdrawal, and the acknowledgement of the willful choice of the woman to retreat from the other's gaze so as to find comfort in isolation. The intimacy of the scene turns the viewer into an intruder who disturbs the woman's willful choice of seclusion. As Jean-Luc Nancy suggests, the intruder [*L'intrus*] "enters by force, through surprise of ruse in any case without the right and without having first been admitted" (2002: 1). His "coming will not cease; nor will it cease being in some respect an intrusion: that is to say, being without right, familiarity, accustomedness, or habit, the stranger's coming will not cease being a disturbance and perturbation of intimacy" (1-2). He adds that if "he is awaited and received without any part of him being unexpected or unwelcome, he is no longer the *intrus*, nor is he any longer the stranger" (1). Even though the viewer's coming will not cease, I suggest in what follows that the viewer may stop being an intruder once we acknowledge intimacy as a relational notion.

The rendering of the woman's body, in contrast to that of her face, is captivating and inviting. I propose that her body, paradoxically, carries the intimate engagement further. The whiteness and smoothness of the skin call for the viewer's eyes, yet in doing so what is encouraged is not a rapist gaze but a sensuous tactile one, which I shall explain presently. I argue that the intimate mode of looking is

promoted formally by the rendering of the body through accentuated outlines. The contours give the body not only its form but also separate it from the background, which is a little darker than the color of the body. The ground and the figure occupy the same plane yet are distinguished from (and connected to) one another by means of the figure's outlines. This body is clearly demarcated and contained by its contours. In a brief discussion of this miniature Renda suggests that Buharî "not only clearly defined his figure in space but also delineated the contours of the nude body through fine modelling, even trying to capture the pink under-tones of her skin" (1995: 66). According to Renda, this was a brave experiment in terms of the established norms of Islamic miniature painting (66). Even though Buharî's figures are somehow more voluminous than previous bodies in the miniature tradition, his work still sustains the line as the primary element of figuration—albeit his outlines are relatively less visible, for example, than those of his contemporary Levnî. In this respect, the line is the ordering and organizing principle of figuration; it functions less to describe the body in its fullness than to organize and design it (Sayin, 2003: 126).

In addition, the contours of the body confine and configure the figure in such a way to leave no space for corporeal excess. The curves of the woman's back, hips, belly, arms, and legs are contained by the strict order of the line, which displays no wrinkles or protruding fat. In this sense, her body is as expressionless as her face. The unpolluted whiteness of her body is more reminiscent of the solidness of marble than the softness of skin. The body, indeed, seems to be numb, as if it were made of stone rather than flesh and blood. As such, her body looks more like a statue than the body of a real woman.

In contrast to the contained solidness of the woman's body, the garment on her knees is vibrantly and warmly colored. In fact, this fabric is the only object that instantaneously captures the viewer's attention; its attractive, vivid colors distinguish it from the soft colors applied in the rest of the miniature. Additionally, its multiple curvilinear folds depart from the rigidity of the firm lines in the rest of the miniature. It seems as if the miniaturist worked more carefully on the garment, meticulously applying its miniscule patterns, folds, and curves, than he did on the woman's body. It has fullness, weight, and, above all, texture. Unlike the restrained and deductive rendering of the woman's body, the garment is excessive. It drapes her legs and knees, falls over the bench, and drops out of the frame in folds. It seems like it is

made of a weighty and thick textile. The garment's materiality invokes the sense of touch; it invites the viewer to caress and feel its texture.

I argue that the contrast between the material texture of the garment and the rigidity of the body it covers provokes the viewer's eyes—demanding, as it were, that the gaze reach out and touch them so as to feel the difference between the two.[71] It encourages what the art historian Aloïs Riegl called "haptic vision."[72] The notion, derived from the Greek word *haptein* (meaning pertaining to the sense of touch), stands for "a kind of vision that 'grabs' the thing it looks at" (Marks, 2004). [73] It implies a close-up viewing distinct from the optical, in which the eyes behave just like the hands. Laura M. Marks notes that the image of touching an object with our eyes "might be a rather painful one, calling up raw, bruised eyeballs scraping against the brute stuff of the world." She envisions instead "a way of seeing that does not posit a violent distance between the seer and the object, and hence cause pain when the two are brought together" (2004). Accordingly, in haptic visuality "the contact can be as gentle as a caress" (2004).

Naked Intimacy

The discrepancy between the garment and the body implies a mixed mode of looking that prompts a tender form of contact with the miniature. The viewer's eyes touch the intense texture of the textile and then move on to the body so as to feel the sensation of flesh beneath the stone-like solidness of its rendering. As Marks suggests, unlike the voyeuristic gaze, this contact need not be violent or rapist. Instead, it entails intimate contact, in which the viewer is touched in return by the nakedness of the woman. Rather than the distanced, disengaged mode often attributed to the sense of

[71] Even though this miniature does not belong to a book that one would touch and hold, it still corresponds to the hand, unlike a painting hanging on the wall. The encounter with miniature is inherently tactile. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the relation between the bodily posture encouraged by the miniature and the hand.

[72] Riegl coined the term *haptic* in opposition to the optical terms used in delineating various historical manifestations, namely Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, of what he called the "will to art." He argued that the art of the ancient Egyptians "maintain[ed] as far as possible the appearance of a unified, isolated object adhering to a plane," which differed from the optical style of Roman art, in which objects "relinquished a tactile connection to the plane" (Marks, 2002: 4).

[73] Deleuze and Guattari appropriate the term haptic in their discussion of nomadic art. Deleuze also uses the term in relation to Francis Bacon's oeuvre. Marks develops the notion in referring to the tactile qualities of video art as "an alternative to the dominant theory of the Gaze, derived from Lacanian psychoanalysis" in order to "understand how looking could be something other than the exercise of power, and how to explain the pleasure of looking as not gendered, not perverse" (2004).

sight, the haptic look touches meticulously, in detail, on individual points. The minute, previously unnoticed wrinkles above the woman's elbows and hips touch the eye. This kind of looking provides the viewer with knowledge of an imperfect naked body. As Riegl suggests,

> We possess certain knowledge about the bounded individual unity of single objects only through the sense of touch. Through touch alone we gain awareness of the *impenetrable borders* which enclose individual material objects. These borders are the tactile surfaces of things. Yet what we touch immediately are not extended surfaces, but *only individual points* [….] The conception is not gained through an immediate perception of touch but through the combination of several such perceptions which necessarily presupposes the intervention of the subjective thought process. It follows, therefore, that the notion of tactile impenetrability as an essential condition of material individuality was achieved not merely on the basis of sense perception but also with the supplementary aid of the thought process. (Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, 39 quoted in Gubser, 2005: 470-471, emphasis added)

In this capacity, the haptic look proceeds from quick visual contacts in which the viewer's eye touches upon the hair, the eyebrows, the lips, the cheeks, the fingertips, the arms, the belly, the hips, the breasts, the nipples, the genitals, the soles, and the painted heels of the woman. These individual points provide the viewer with a body in bits and pieces. As in the case of the literal act of touching, the jigsaw-like perception of the haptic look culminates in an image of the body formed out of the viewer's subjective intervention. However, this intervention does not produce a coherent and unified body appreciated from a distance. Rather, it assumes shape as the image of a singular body perceived in detail. The haptic look allows the viewer to acknowledge the materiality, solidity, and impenetrability of the body. This way of knowing the body is an intimate one, as the viewer comes close to the image, caresses its details, and acknowledges it as an impenetrable surface in the realm of the other.

I contend that this process of haptic looking transforms the nude into a singular naked body. It adorns the nude with the intimacy of nakedness. This body is

a touched one that touches the viewer in return, rather than being a nude that is the object of a distanced gaze. However, the distinction I make between the nude and the naked does not correspond to Kenneth Clark's distinction between the two in his classic treatise *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (1956). According to Clark, nakedness is a "natural state" of being "deprived of our clothes," implying "the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition" (1956: 3). The nude, in contrast, is the body in representation: "a balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body re-formed" (3). As Lynda Nead notes, Clark's distinction promotes "the transformation from the naked to the nude" as a "shift from the actual to the ideal—the move from a perception of unformed, corporeal matter to the recognition of unity and constraint, the regulated economy of art" (1992: 14).[74] In his response to Clark, John Berger attempts to value the naked while retaining the binary opposition between the two notions. He writes:

> To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen by others and yet not recognized for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. [….] Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. To be naked is to be without disguise. To be on display is to have the surface of one's own skin, the hairs of one's body turned into a disguise which, in that situation, can never be discarded. The nude is condemned to never being naked. Nudity is a form of dress. (Berger, 1072: 54)

For Berger, the nude always asks for the voyeuristic gaze. However, there are a few valuable exceptions in painting that are no longer nudes but "paintings of loved women, more or less naked" (57). Such works can be created because the "painter's personal vision of the particular women" allows the spectator only to "witness their relationship—but he can do no more; he is forced to recognize himself as the outsider he is" (57).

I distance myself from both authors' accounts. I maintain that the body is always already in representation, and therefore nakedness and nudity are both discourses on the depicted body. As I understand it, nakedness and nudity are

[74] This economy of art refers to an idealized, classic, and "official" mode of representing the nude that excludes traditions such as the Gothic and the Baroque, as well as non-Western modes.

viewing positions taken up by the viewer. Following T. J. Clark, I argue that nakedness entails the acknowledgment that "we are nowhere but in a body, constructed by it, by the way it incorporates the signs of other people" (1990: 146).[75] Nudity, on the contrary, "is a set of signs for the belief that our body is ours, a great generality that we make our own, or leave in art in the abstract" (146). In this capacity, the haptic look—because it involves being touched by the image in return, and constructs the body of the woman in relation to that of the viewer—underlines those aspects of the miniature that displays the body as a naked body. This involves the intimacy between bodies when they touch each other.

While the haptic look enfolds the depicted body in the discourse of nakedness and the intimacy of the mutual touch, it also occasions eroticism of the sort that is involved in tactile encounters.[76] As Marks argues, the haptic look invites "the viewer to dissolve his or her subjectivity in the close and bodily contact with the image," creating "an erotic relationship, a shifting between distance and closeness" (2002: 13). Referring to Emanuel Levinas's concept of eroticism, Marks argues:

> Eroticism is an encounter with an other that delights in the fact of its alterity, rather than an attempt to know it. Visual erotics allows the thing seen to maintain its unknowability, delighting in playing at the boundary of that knowability. Visual erotics allows the object of vision to remain inscrutable. But it is not voyeurism for in visual erotics the looker is also implicated. By engaging with an object in a haptic way, I come to the surface of my self…. [I] los[e] myself in the intensified relation with an other that cannot be known. (2002: 18-19)

In this sense, eroticism and intimacy seem to contradict each other. As Lord suggests, the notion of the intimate involves the development of "a profound

[75] In his reading of Manet's *Olympia* (1865), Clark asserts that the signs for nakedness are related to those of class; hence the real subject of *Olympia* is the class system. I am, however, not arguing for such a class-related reading.

[76] For Freud, looking and touching are inherently related. Looking is a derivative of touching and for that reason is able to arouse desire. In her reading of "Rembrandt"'s *Susanna* Bal notes that looking is a metonymic substitute for touching and proposes to reverse the relation and "see touching as an inherent second phase of looking, while the desire aroused by looking is generated by the prospect of touching" (1991: 150).

knowledge of the other," whereas eroticism plays on the border between knowing and not-knowing (1999: 6).[77] The carnal intimacy brought by the haptic look takes place on the surface of the body, not within its most profound spaces, allegedly concealed in the innermost reaches of the body. As such, it retains the impenetrability of the body and hence the erotic impulses of play.

Perhaps the most intense moments of this erotic intimacy occur when the viewer loses herself in the details through which the inside of the body opens toward its outside, to the other. As the haptic look tends to caress the image in close proximity, the intimate holes of the body, such as the ears, the mouth, the nostrils, the nipples, and the genitals, opening to the inmost depths of the body, become more visible. Even though all these openings are vigilantly rendered, the mouth, the nipples, and the genitals attract more attention than the rest as they are accentuated with strong pinkish lines. These are not only erotogenic zones but also apertures that reveal glimpses into the interior of the body that is kept out of sight under the protection of the skin. They unlock the realm of the intimate by allowing the inside and the outside, the self and the other, to become permeable. Perhaps because of this permeability, Gérard Wajcman argues that "one must watch [….] over the openings which might pierce the wall though which the Enemy might infiltrate: mouth, ears, nostrils, through which the taste of the world can penetrate and with it corruption and sin" (2004b: 77). According to him, it is less the image of the body that must be protected than its holes:

> Nudity is less scandalous than that which opens the interior of the body and frees the soul to sin. The visible envelope and what is seen of bodies do not fall under the same prohibitions as what is hidden in the body. This is why particular attention is paid to the feminine sex which, less closed than the masculine sex to the holes of the body, is assumed to be more permeable to corruption. (2004b: 77)

Contrary to Wajcman's advice, the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* exposes such

[77] The film *Intimacy* (2001), directed by Patrice Chéreau, narrates the intricate relation between intimacy and erotics. It tells the story of a bartender who has casual sex with a mysterious woman every Wednesday. He becomes more curious about her life and begins spying on her in order to gain "profound knowledge" of her. This unsolicited quest for intimacy destroys their relationship.

sinful openings rather intensely. As if to compensate for the inherent invisibility of the genitals, the hairless labia is drawn in an exaggerated manner. So are the nipples and the mouth. However, these areas do not make the intimate visible; instead they give the promise of an opening. Like the aperture on the top of the basin, they open nowhere but to darkness. As such, they maintain the delight in playing at the boundary of the knowability of the other, of the intimate.

Moreover, in line with the previous reading that suggested that the lack of pubic hair gives the viewer visual access to the inside of the woman's body, I propose that the figure's long black hair possesses a transgressive significance. The excess of hair compensates for the weakened potential sexual power of the woman.[78] As Boer suggests, hair evokes contradictory responses: "admiration on the one hand and fear on the other" (2004: 64). Invoking the myth of Medusa, she argues that hair refers to the relation between beauty and threat. Similarly in her article "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination" (1984), Elizabeth G. Gitter states that "for folk, literary and psychoanalytic traditions agree that the luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality, even of wantonness" (938). In addition, she proposes that hair is also an expressive means: it is "the text that explains" the woman, an "outward sign of the inner self" (941). In this respect, the hair of the woman and the act of washing the hair can be read as juxtaposing the possession of sexual power with the exposure of an inner intimate world.

While such sinful openings to the other are made extremely visible, another semi-hole, namely the navel, is effaced from the woman's body. The belly button, perhaps more than any other hole, is tied to the intimate. As Bal notes, it is both a "trace of the mother, and the token of autonomy of the subject, male and female alike" (1991: 22). It is the trace of the mother's womb, the most intimate space of all. It also testifies to the subject's independence from the mother as an autonomous being. The absence of the woman's belly button, however, should not be read as showing either that the woman lacks human qualities or that the representation is not realistic. The metaphor of the navel, according to Bal, is a detail that opens up an

[78] Boer provides an in-depth analysis of the function of braided hair employed by Lady Montagu in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*. She argues that braided hair, as an index, refers to Medusa. In line with Freud's reading of the myth, she suggests that the sight of the braided hair evokes a castration anxiety on the part of the despot, demonstrating the ambivalence status of his dominance (2004: 56-74). However, I distance myself from such a psychoanalytic reading based on castration anxiety as I think that it, too, tends to "read the same story everywhere."

interpretative strategy that allows one to concentrate on an odd detail, often overlooked or resisted, that does not fit the "official" interpretation. It is a meaningful pointer that allows "plurality and mobility, that allows the viewer to propose new readings … without letting those readings fall into the arbitrariness" (22).

In the miniature, the navel, in its absence, becomes more than a metaphor. Whereas Bal argues for the effective possibilities of the detail, I suggest that the lack of a detail could be just as productive as a depicted one.[79] Nevertheless, the absence here does not fall into the psychoanalytic understanding of the phallic lack that has to be replaced with an object.[80] In line with my reading of the miniature, the absent navel hints at one of the main tenets of the notion of intimacy. The invisibility of the most intimate marks of the subject enables us to recognize that intimacy might not be about gaining a profound knowledge of the other. Instead, we might conceive of intimacy as a relationship based on the acknowledgement of the other's unknowability. The absent detail is a synecdoche of the opaqueness of the other as well as representation. In this capacity, it promotes a look that does not attempt to penetrate but instead remains on the surface of the image and the skin of the body so as to be intimate, however distant it may be.

My reading of the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature touched upon instances of what I call an intimate encounter. Each instance through which intimacy is played out brought about a tension between different possible definitions of the notion of the intimate. The core oscillation is between the intimate defined as that relating to the profound and innermost of the subject (and the image) that has to be surmounted by the look of the other, and intimacy defined as a relational practice performed on the surface, which acknowledges the alterity of the subject (and the image). As such, the encounter with the miniature invites us to discuss intimacy as a concept.

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[79] In the previous chapter, I suggested a similar reading of the absence of the navel.

[80] Bal states that by choosing a bodily metaphor, she wishes to demonstrate both her allegiance and her polemic opposition to psychoanalytic theory. She writes: "Here the navel is the symbolization of a body part, just as the phallus is, and it too is loaded with connotations of gender. Yet these are radically different in status. The phallus refers to gender in terms of haves and have-nots…. The navel, in contrast, is fundamentally gender specific…. But it is also democratic that both men and women have it" (1991: 23).

Redefining the Intimate

In *Fenêtre: Chroniques du regard et de l'intime* (2004), Gérard Wajcman, one of the few scholars who has dwelled on the notion of the intimate in depth, attempts to outline intimacy as a visual performance. Informed by Lacanian psychoanalysis, he defines the intimate as the place, essentially both architectural and scopic, where the subject can put himself/herself to the test beyond the gaze of the Other. The intimate, according to Wajcman, remains beyond the grasp of the Other. He argues that the intimate is

> a space in internal exclusion, an island where the subject escapes even the supposition of being watched [….] That space can be internal, subjective, just as it could be embodied in a physical place [….] From the watchful eyes of the Other […] I get to the very heart of the question of the Intimate [….] The Other is moved by an absolute desire to see, to see everything, that there was before anything the presence of an irreducible and insatiable watchfulness. Fundamentally, we are watched beings. If the basic assumption is the pre-existence of watching, the fundamental question that then arises … [is] whether or not there exists for the subject a space where he can withdraw from the panoptical eye of the Other, that all-seeing eye of the Gorgon that never sleeps. (2007)

For Wajcman, "the hidden, secret, shadowy place we need to believe in," where the subject would feel *chez soi*, came to be called the intimate after the sixteenth century (2004b: 67). The intimate, in the modern sense, took form in the Renaissance with the inception of modern painting, which is defined by Alberti as an "open window."[81] He argues that the tableau-window enabled the viewer to create an intimacy with herself because it creates the illusion that the viewer is shielded from being seen in front of the painting. Finally, the tableau-window allows the viewer to see without being seen in return. Hence, she is subtracted from the gaze of the Other (62). However, the intimate is not a "barricaded place in which the subject is enclosed." (71). Rather, it is "precisely the place from which the subject […] can

[81] In Chapter 6, I discuss the window metaphor and the conceptualization of the visual field the trope brings about.

unite himself with others" (71-72). It is a space of necessary segregation in which the subject is "outside of visible things" so that she can join in that which exists outside (72).

While Wajcman depends heavily on Lacan's conceptualization of the visual field, within which the subject is always under the threat of the Gaze, the cultural and literary critic Hamid Dabashi offers an alternative understanding of the intimate as it has been understood in Islamic cultures. He points out that the notion of *Mahram* (intimate) has been conceptualized in relation to its opposite *Na-Mahram*, which he considers to be "the most anxiety-provoking binary opposition in an Islamic context" (2003: 937). He writes:

> If we consider the trilateral root of *Mahram*—HRM—and note that its cognate *Haram* denotes "that which is forbidden," as opposed to *Halal* from HLL, which is "that which is permitted," it becomes clear that the figure of *Mahram* is inside a territorial boundary of private sacredness, while *Na-Mahram* is outside it in the publicity of some profane space. (937)

As such, the intimate is space bounded. In addition, and in a way similar to Wajcman's account, the intimate in the Islamic context is a scopic regime that manifests itself in architecture. The main difference between the two understandings is that the first promotes intimacy as a singular subjective notion, whereas the latter refers to a relationship by stating that the intimate is that which can be seen by others. However, the *Maharem* (those who are *mahram*) is strictly defined. It includes "one's parents and siblings primarily, but it extends into a whole group of people with whom one is related by blood" (Dabashi, 2003: 939). It is important to note that this categorization is gender-bound. That is to say: for a woman, those men to whom she is not related by blood are considered *na-mahram*—hence, forbidden. Those who are the intimates, on the other hand, can be seen without the restrictions imposed by the *purdah* (screen) or the veil. As such, *mahram* is an ordering of bodies based on gender segregation. It constructs the (female) body as the locus of the intimate and (male) sight as the main potential intruder of that intimate body. In the regime of the *mahrem* the (female) body is shielded from the gaze of the *na-mahram* while she is given the power to see (behind the veil or *purdah*) in a relation

in which she remains unreachable to the other's gaze. This formulation comes close to Wajcman's definition of the intimate as "not to be seen seeing" (71).[82]

Dabahsi suggests that another gender-neutral opposition between *Khodi* and *Gharibeh* constitutes an adjacent binary opposition to *Mahram* and *Na-Mahram*:

> *Khodi*, as "he or she who belongs to oneself," is interior to the sacred space, while *Gharibeh* is a stranger to it. While *Khodi* carries all the psychological comfort of "belonging to one-self," *Gharibeh*, conversely, carries all the social fears of a total stranger. *Khodi* is territorial to the sacred space; *Gharibeh* is aterritorial, strange, infectious. (2003: 938)

Moreover, he adds yet another additional binary in defining the *mahram*:

> *Mahram* is equally related to the categorical inhibition of *Haram*, "that which is forbidden," as opposed to *Halal*, "that which is permitted"; and thus to be a *Mahram* is to be privy to a knowledge whose publicity is absolutely forbidden, and thus carries a strong juridical inhibition with it; while *Na-Mahram* by extension is he who is juridically forbidden to have a public knowledge of the strictly private. (2003: 938)

All these dichotomies mentioned by Dabashi make it clear that the intimate is a strictly defined intersubjective relationship. It stems not from a singular subject but from an intersubjective encounter. Once a person is granted the peculiarities of intimacy, she is allowed to see "that which is forbidden," or to gain "a knowledge whose publicity is absolutely forbidden." The definition of the intimate within the Islamic context seems to refer to a state of collective being rather than a nucleus where the subject should reside before joining the world outside.

No doubt this collective from which the intimate flourishes is defined in terms of kinship and gender segregation. However, at least in the Ottoman context, as Tülay Artan notes in her article "Mahremiyet: Mahrûmiyetin Resmi," the notion

[82] The paragraph from which the quote comes reads in full: "The hidden is the source if two powers of the modern subject: power of the intimate and power of seeing. Not being seen is the base of two powers which are arranged according to what is subtracted from the gaze of the Other: not being seen in intimacy, in the body and in the amorous exchange of bodies—this is the intimate; not to be seen seeing, this is the master gaze, the window is the weapon of the two powers" (2004b: 71).

of the intimate was always contested and its boundaries were under constant negotiation. By means of an in-depth analysis of the miniatures *Hamse-i Atayi*, she argues that, beginning in the seventeenth century, what had earlier been considered *mahrem* found ways to be visually and textually expressed (1993: 92). The woman in the *hamam* miniature illustrates the expansion of the limits of the intimate beyond kinship relations and gendered order of looking. In this respect, the dropping of the garment off from the woman's body might be read as paralleling the fall of the law of the *mahrem* embodied in the practice of veiling or the screening of the *purdah*. Its lowering can be seen as a challenge to the scopic regime of the intimate, an encouragement to the viewer to become a *khodi* and share the secret sacredness, the intimate.

While the miniature revised the structure of intimacy to its contemporaries, it also allows *us* to rework the notion. Wajcman suggests that the modern of understanding of intimacy can be found in the conception of the tableau window, which enabled the viewer to believe in the illusion that she is concealed from the Gaze. Consequently, the subject can separate herself from the world; she can contemplate it in secret and look at herself, away from the gaze of the others. She can see without being seen. Missing in Wajcman's account is the possibility that the painting can look back at its viewer and engage in a dialogue.

No doubt, Wajcman builds his discussion of the modern conception of intimacy on the operation of the modern tableau. In this respect, the comparison between the tableau and the miniature might sound incongruous, as the two media are radically different from one another. [83] However, my suggestion to re-examine of the notion of intimacy through this analysis of the *hamam* miniature bears on the notion of "alternative modernity," asserting that modern notions unfold within different cultures and lead to different practices. [84] If we accept that the language and lessons of Western modernity have always been contested outside as well as inside

[83] Here, I do not wish to conflate the operation of the tableau and the miniature painting. The radical difference between the two allows me to conceptualize an alternative to the modern understanding of the intimate. For an in-depth discussion of the incommensurability of the two media, see Chapter 5 and 6.

[84] The term is most notably associated with the essays collected in the volume *Alternative Modernities,* edited by Dilip Parameshwarg Aonkar. The essays address the dilemmas of modernity from transnational and transcultural perspectives.

the West, then the miniature offers us a way of understanding another conceptualization of the intimate.

However, with this statement I do not wish to argue that miniature the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature is a mere reflection on the notion of intimacy as it has been lived up to in its own time. Rather, I suggest that the miniature stages intimacy as a relational notion and proposes that the viewer become complicit with such understanding. In this respect, it promotes an instance when the object looks back and initiates a dialogue with the viewer—though the woman in the miniature does not look back at the viewer. It suggests intimacy as an intersubjective state of being that lets the other see the intimate without exposing it entirely. Contrary to Wajcman's understanding, my reading of the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* suggests that the intimate starts in the realm of the other; it is only through that realm that one can construct the intimate. However, this conception of the intimate does not involve subtracting the profound knowledge of the other. Rather, it begins from the radical impossibility—because it is an intersubjective process, constructed by means of constant negotiation and dialogue—of the profoundness of the intimate.

In the introduction of this study, I invoked Hubert Damisch's axiom that "art thinks." According to Ernst van Alphen, this axiom entails understanding art as a form of thinking that compels the viewer to start a "dialogue with it by articulating questions of a more general—for instance, philosophical, political, or social—nature." The artwork becomes a *historical* articulation of a general, more fundamental problem (2005: 4). My discussion of the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature demonstrated the ways in which an artwork raises diverse questions and lets the viewer engage in dialogue with it. The process of thinking starts with the fall of the woman in the *hamam* miniature from the conventional context of the miniature tradition: the book and the pre-text. A contemporary souvenir, which reproduces the miniature on its cover with the textual intervention of the phrase "Sultan's address book," allowed me to locate where the miniature would fall once it is separated from the materially and textually protective settings of the book. The textual manipulation underlines a latent Orientalist gaze that, inevitably, informs the contemporary viewer's encounter with the miniature. The Orientalist gaze ignores the singularity of the miniature by subsuming it to a stereotypical reading that sees the same story everywhere.

In contrast to this potential reading I suggested a critical process of re-looking that reads the image for the difference and plurality residing, potentially, within it. The intimate encounter between the viewer and the miniature unravels in interrelated instances of engagement. I argued that the *halvet*, with its connotations of sacred retreat, defines a space of intimacy where the viewer is given a sight of an intimate moment in which the woman, perhaps, abides in herself. Allowing no suggestion of carnal excess, the rendering of the woman's body by means of accented contours constructs a tactile opposition to the textured garment falling over her knees. This contrast paves the way for a haptic look that caresses her body in close proximity to her, leaving the body bare and naked. Accordingly, I contended that the discourse of nakedness promotes an intimate bodily relation in which the other's body bears the signs of the self. This relation purports to be an erotic encounter that plays on the boundaries between knowing and not-knowing the other's body. Moreover, the carefully rendered intimate openings of the woman's body encourage the viewer to experience intimacy as a state in which one has profound knowledge of the other—even as the absent belly button invites us to consider the notion otherwise. In this capacity, my analysis advocates a mode of engagement with the image by sketching out the notion of intimacy as a visual practice.

This intimate encounter is a strategy that enables the viewer to critically engage with the miniature by acknowledging that, in its historical specificity, the miniature engenders general, transhistorical, and philosophical questions. The miniature visualizes a certain shift in the traditional understanding of the intimate that was conceived in the dichotomies of *mahram* and *na-mahram*, *haram* and *halal*, and *khodi* and g*haribeh*, oppositions that constructed the notion of intimacy on the basis of kinship and gender segregation. Such historical allocation allows us to rethink Wajcman's definition of the intimate as the place that remains aloof from the gaze of the other as realized at the inception of the modern painting: the tableau-window. The encounter with the miniature provides us with an alternative model of intimacy in which the image looks back at the viewer and initiates an intimate, intersubjective engagement. This process allows us to reconsider the intimate not as an absolute state of being *chez soi* away from the gaze of the others, but as a dialogical process in which intimacy is constructed as an intersubjective performance.

In the first two chapters of this study I attempted to contribute in the discussions pertaining to the function of the pictorial detail and the the ways in which it affects our encounters with images. In the following chapter, I zoom out from the detail to a wider realm of inquiry, namely the representation of time and movement in miniature painting. I look at a miniature series from the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* by Master Levnî that depicts the procession of Sultan Ahmed III in three subsequent folios. This ordering has an anachronistic cinematic "touch" to it because the technique underlines a problem of representing an *event*—a problem that extends into the treatment of time and space within motion. Relying on the "critical loop" between two distinct media—a concept inspired by the writings of the Soviet cinematographer Sergei Eisenstein—I address issues concerning representation in the miniature series by engaging a chain of cinematic concepts such as the still, the out-of-field, montage and the interval. This montage of concepts allows me to mediate on the ways in which the procession miniatures produce an idea of event-ness in effect and affect in the service of constructing an imperial visuality.

CHAPTER 3: Double Encounters: The Circumcision Parade in Intervals

On October 10, 1720, four Ottoman princes—Süleyman, Mehmed, Mustafa, and Bayezid—were circumcised. The event was celebrated as an extraordinary public festival that lasted fifteen days. The festivities, thoroughly organized and overseen by the state, included receptions, banquets, parades of guilds, athletic competitions, circuses, musical performances and dances, mock battles, and fire shows. The circumcision ceremonies, one of the most highly and reliably recorded events of the period, are mentioned in contemporary documents, dispatches by foreign ambassadors, and annals of the state as well as in later history books about the Ottomans.

In this chapter, I focus on the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi,* the only extant visual account of the circumcision festival made by an Ottoman miniaturist. My aim is to understand the ways in which the miniatures of the *Sûrname* visualize the circumcision festivities as an imperial *event*. Scholars of Ottoman history suggest that public festivities celebrating imperial circumcisions and weddings were held in order to exalt the glory of the empire and reassure the people of the authority of the reigning sultan. The books that narrate the story of these events, such as the *Sûrname-i Vehbi,* were made not only to commemorate the fleeting events of the celebrations but also to assert for all time the glory of the empire. The miniatures in these books are significant not only as historical documents but also as images performing their imperial function upon their contemporary viewers.

The 137 single-page miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* visualize a continuous event in fragments. Representing a period of forty-two days, the series opens with a depiction of events that took place nineteen days prior to the beginning of the festival and ends by showing scenes from the day following the circumcisions. In reenacting the festival events for the viewer, the miniatures perform a sort of visual storytelling. As such, they do not merely record the festive occasions but rather create them as events in the here and now of the viewer. This attempt to capture the event-ness of the festival, however, brings about a problem concerning the representation of sequentiality and motion.

To address the ways in which the miniatures of the *Sûrname* perform an event visually, I have selected a set of miniatures that depict the arrival of Sultan Ahmed

III to the festival arena on the first day of the ceremonies. The series, consisting of three sets of double-paged miniatures spread over three folios, provides us with a sequential ordering that is a unique occurrence in the history of Ottoman miniature painting. The individual miniature panels that are strictly cut off from one another underlines a problem of representing an *event*—a problem that extends into the treatment of time and space within motion. [85]

In his writings on the relation between visual arts and cinema, the Soviet cinematographer Sergei M. Eisenstein suggests that that each work of art deals with the *problematic tradition of representation*, which addresses a certain body of problems that have been handed down to the figurative arts over time (Montani, 2003: 206). According to him, works of art often assume the task of "putting-in-image" the constant problems of representation so as to use these problems to obtain effects of meaning (206). I contend that the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, for its part, joins the debate by making an innovative statement about the ways in which painting can restore an event by extending space and time within its given medium, the book. It also addresses the problem of representing motion in an image, which has been one of the imperative concerns of the practice of painting.

Eisenstein also wrote that "[i]t seems that all the arts, throughout the centuries, tended toward cinema. Conversely, cinema helps us to understand their methods" (Bois, 1989: 112). Inspired by Eisenstein's observation, I speculate that the ways in which the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* deal with the problems concerning representation mentioned above can be understood by way of cinematic concepts. This is so not because there is an ostensible similarity between the two media but because the two bring forth a similar representational concern regarding temporality and motion. The operation of the cuts between miniature panels provides the series with a spatio-temporal expansion and simultaneously articulates a force of motion that, in turn, constitutes an *image* of the procession as an event. In this way, the series does not provide the viewer with the whole procession but rather presents instances of it in a fashion akin to Roland Barthes' conceptualization of the cinematic still. For Barthes, the filmic cannot be "grasped in the film 'in situation', 'in movement', 'in its natural state', but only in that major artifact, the still" (1977: 65).

[85] The circumcision parade, spread out over sixteen consecutive double folios toward the end of the book (164a-172b), is a longer version of the sultan's procession to the festival arena.

For Barthes, the still is adorned with an obtuse meaning that gives away the filmic in the film; whereas in my analysis, the miniature stills bring about the "pictorial" in painting. While the notion of the still allows the analyst to read *into* the images vertically, another cinematic concept, namely, the "out-of-field" [*hors-champ*]—referring to "what is neither seen nor understood, but [….] nevertheless [is] perfectly present," enables me to read *across* the series, horizontally (Deleuze, 2003a: 16). To read across the miniatures is to highlight the visual ellipses between the miniature panels. The "out-of-field" performs its function of adding space to space, thereby forcing the viewer to perceive the procession as a gigantic mass. As an in-between space, the "out-of-field" also contains an inner temporality that stretches the experience of viewing time.

Moreover, the series articulates the problem of representing motion in painting. I propose that movement has been expelled from the single miniature stills and has been displaced into a space in between the miniatures that exhorts an *idea* of motion. This anti-representational understanding of movement, which is produced in between images, accords with one of the significant notions in the theory of montage, namely, the interval. This term refers to the correlation between two distant images brought together by montage and concerns their intellectual proximity. Even though the notion of the interval has been developed in relation to cinematic montage, its operation is not exclusive to cinema; it concerns the articulation or disjunction between images on a diegetic or non-diegetic continuum and, in this sense, the passage from one miniature panel to another constructs an intervallic space within which the force of motion is articulated. Such articulation of movement is different from the painterly illusion of movement, and in its capacity to provoke a sensation it helps to represent the procession as an event, rather than a static moment.

Ultimately, I contend that the combined effect of spatio-temporal extension and the idea of motion invoked through the leaps between the segmented miniatures reenacts the experience (in an affective dimension) of encountering the Ottoman sultan. In this respect, the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* not only depict an event but also effect an imperial visuality that has been constructed through the development of a visual technique that allows the viewer to reenact the experience of being a spectator of the events. Such a technique invites the contemporary viewer to locate herself in the viewing position made available for the subjects of the empire and encourages her to appreciate the grandiosity of the sultan.

Visualizing an Imperial Festival

The celebration of imperial events, such as the circumcisions of sultans' sons and royal births and weddings, as public festivals was a common occurrence in the Ottoman Empire.[86] As most festivals of this kind took place following a political or economic crisis, it is likely that they were prepared so as to reassure the people of the authority of the sultan and to display the wealth and magnificence of the Empire to itself, its subjects, as well as its enemies, represented by the foreign ambassadors invited to attend the proceedings (Atil, 1999: 17; Yerasimos, 2000). Such public occasions put the entire Empire on display. The sultan and his sons were themselves part of the spectacle: they were on "display" for fifteen days in different parts of the city. Such public appearances by members of the royal family were rare occasions when the public was given the opportunity to see the sultan in the flesh, albeit at a distance.[87]

The festivals were a period that broadcast in visual form the power and lavishness of the imperial authority as well as a time of controlled excess. As Stephane Yerasimos notes, during the time of celebrations "the prohibitions under which society labored were lifted to a substantial degree and that which was forbidden—or which at least had to be done furtively—could be done openly" (2000).[88] In this sense, the Ottoman festival can be compared to medieval and Renaissance carnivals as analyzed by Mikhail Bakhtin, which were marked by the "temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men [….] and of the prohibitions of usual life" (Bakhtin 1984, p. 15). However, such a comparative approach will ultimately prove unproductive, as most of the documents surviving from the period are official records instead of those focusing on everyday

[86] The first festival was held in 1367 (?) for the circumcision of Sultan Murat I's sons. The circumcisions of Süleyman's sons in 1530 and 1539, of Murat's sons in 1582, and of Mehmet IV's sons in 1675, among others, were also celebrated as public events. From the eighteenth century on, the births of sultans' daughters were also celebrated publicly. The last festival of this kind took place in 1850 (Atil, 1999: 42).

[87] In the so-called circumcision procession of the 1720 festival, the entire Seraglio administration, including the military officers, walked through the city. The guilds' parades performed during the festival comprised tradesmen and craftsmen of every kind, from mutton-butchers to slave-dealers. Both parades were performed in front of the sultan.

[88] For instance, the *nahıl* (a tree-like structure carrying fruits and candies to be presented to the princes) could be decorated with three-dimensional figures of human beings; *raki* and wine could be drunk at the feasts hosted by the sovereign; and women (albeit dressed as men) could appear before an audience.

life, such as the writings of Rabelais, which were Bakhtin's immediate point of departure.[89]

Among the extant documents, the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* gives the most detailed account of the 1720 festival. The book falls under the literary genre of *Sûrname*, a type of historical writing unique to the Ottomans that consisted of information about and descriptions of state festivals commemorating royal births, circumcisions, and weddings.[90] *Sûrname-i Vehbi* was commissioned by and presented to Sultan Ahmed III and his family.[91] Existing volumes of the book provide us with a comprehensive visual and textual day-to-day account of the festival from an imperial perspective. The text was written by the court poet Seyyid Hüseyin Vehbi in Turkish prose and was copied by an unknown scribe in *nastaliq* script.[92] According to Doğan Kuban, Vehbi's text contains a pompous sort of prose that, in a sense, offers two parallel texts: "the first is a chronological, day-by-day account of all the details of the events related to the celebration of the circumcision of Sultan Ahmed III's four sons and the second is a text in which the people, creatures, and objects intimately associated with those events are presented within a seemingly unbounded laudatory allegory" (2000).

The copy I discuss contains 175 folios with 137 miniatures executed by Master Levnî and his apprentices. All the miniatures, with one exception (f. 37b), are realized on two pages. Even though the manuscript is undated, it was probably

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[89] Derin Terzioglu (1995) deploys Bakthinian notions of the carnivalesque and of laughter in her analysis of the 1582 *Sûrname*.

[90] *Sur* means "festival" and *name* means "book," hence *Sûrname* can be translated as the "book of festival." For more information on *Sûrname*s, see Esin Atil (1999). *Sûrname-i Vehbi* is the second and last *sûrname* to be illustrated. The first illustrated *surname* is *Sûrname-i Humayun* (Topkapi Museum, H. 1344), devoted to the circumcision ceremonies of Sultan Murad III's son, held in 1582. This event, which lasted 52 days, was not only the longest Ottoman festival but also the festival narrated with the largest number of illustrations; its *Sûrname* contains 427 miniatures even in its incomplete state (Atil, 1993: 182). For an extensive discussion of the *Sûrname-i Humayun* and reproductions of most of the miniatures included in the book, see Atasoy (1997). For a profound comparison of the *Sûrname-i Humayun* and the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, see Tansuğ (1993).

[91] Ahmed III (r. 1703 -1730) was the 23rd sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The period starting with the assignment of the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha in 1718 and ending with the Patrona Halil rebellion that caused the dethronement of the Sultan in 1730 and is known as the "Tulip Era," named for the flower that symbolized the age. The period is marked by large-scale changes in social and cultural life. The relations with Europe were extended, as some Ottoman officers were sent to France and many European diplomats came to Constantinople, which in turn influenced Europe and gave birth tp the *turquerie* style. The era is considered to be the "cultural renaissance" of the Ottoman Empire. See also Chapter 4.

[92] *Nastaliq* is one of the main genres of Islamic calligraphy. It is among the most fluid calligraphy styles for the Arabic alphabet and was frequently used for Ottoman texts.

produced sometime between 1727/28, when Vehbi finished the text, and 1732, when Levnî died (Atil, 1993: 181).[93]

The first double-paged miniatures of the book depict the visit of Sultan Ahmed III and his three sons to the Old Palace nineteen days before the beginning of the ceremonies (6b-7a). These two miniatures establish the compositional and semantic relation between the two pages employed for most of the *Sûrname* miniatures. The right folio is reserved for the protagonists, that is, the sultan, the princes, and the high-ranking seraglio administrators, while the left folio displays the spectacles and includes depictions of the entertainers and commonfolk who can be considered part of the show.[94] As Atil notes, the movement used in the initial miniatures is exceptional in the whole book, directed as it is toward the left—following the flow of the Arabic script. Such directionality not only introduces the viewer to the spectacle but also invites her "to come in the book and turn the pages" (Atil, 1993: 185).

The miniatures that follow show the location of the event: *Ok Meydanı*, the archery grounds overlooking the Golden Horn, the site where all daytime festivities took place (10b-11a). The next folio represents the arrival of Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha and his reception at the imperial pavilion. The procession of the Sultan to the festival arena is depicted in three subsequent double-paged miniatures (13b-16a). The following eighty-nine single miniatures depict almost all of the events that took place during the festival, including the admission ceremonies of the upper-echelon

[93] There is another illustrated copy of the *Sûrname* (Topkapi Museum, A. 3594), with 231 folios and 140 miniatures, that seems to have been produced by a different group of artists who used Levnî's pictorial cycle as a model (Atil, 1993: 181). Levnî, meaning "colorful," is the *nom de plume* of Abdülcelil Celebi (?-1732). His works *Kebir Musavver Silsilename* (Topkapi Museum, A. 3109), *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, and his single-page miniatures in different albums are regarded as reflecting the visual culture of the "Tulip Era." Almost all scholarly works on Levnî promote him as a "genius" of the art of miniature painting. This should be understood as an anachronistic reconstruction of a unique artist "on our own" in a culture in which the Western romantic (and post-romantic) notion of the artist—i.e., "Artist" with a capital "A"—hardly existed. However, it is plausible to argue that Levnî indeed conceived of himself as an "artist" and showed this sense of his artistic identity by signing most of his works. In the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, there are two signatures by Levnî (plates 172 b and 21a). The first signature is placed on the footstool of the sultan's throne, thus expressing his respect to the sultan; the second, placed right below a figure on horseback in the final circumcision parade, has led art historians to identify the figure as Levnî himself (Atil, 1999 and Ünver, 1949). For short but incisive parables on the reasons why artist's signature tend not to exist in Ottoman miniatures and on individual artistic style, see Pamuk (2001, 74-83). For more on Levnî as the Artist, see Ünver, (1949; 1957), Atil (1999), and Irepoğlu (1999).

[94] This is the case for all the miniatures representing the festivities taking place in the main arena. The night shows took place in another location by the Golden Horn. In those miniatures, the sultan is placed on the right-hand side, which emphasizes the difference of the location.

seraglio officers; banquets for the administrative cadre and for janissaries, sheikhs, and imams; shows of the acrobats, musicians, dancers, wrestlers, magicians, and drug-addicts; performances of the dockyard and artillery squadrons; *cirit* games; night entertainments and firework shows; and the procession of the trade guilds.

The festival miniatures are followed by those showing the circumcision parade, which took place a week after the festivities ended. The miniatures of the parade are spread over sixteen consecutive double folios, presenting the viewer with a show of Ottoman state structure: representatives of its administrative, military, and religious sectors march from one palace to the other. The last two scenes of the book (139b-140a) are separated from the parade miniatures by a large amount of text (the largest such textual interlude in the book, in fact) inserted between miniature panels (approximately twenty double folios). The final miniature set depicts the serene atmosphere of the day after the circumcision. On the right folio, the princes rest in beds in the Baghdad Pavilion, and on the left, the sultan in his casual outfit casts golden coins as gifts to those who made the festival possible. This scene marks a calm and blissful conclusion to the hectic days and nights of the celebration.

A few works about the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, such as Atil (1993; 1999) and Tansuğ (1993), focus on the structure or the order of the miniature series rather than take up the discussion on realism that dominates the rest of the scholarship. Comparing Nakkash Osman's *Sûrname-i Humayun* (1582) with Levnî's later *Sûrname*, Tansuğ argues that the latter refuses to employ the schematic approach used in the first, which had presented the events in the same fixed, décor-like environment (1993: 61). Levnî's *Sûrname* displays each place where the festival took place in a novel way by adding to each site a variety of new details. Moreover, he deploys two lines of movement that affect the overall structure of the miniatures. To underline the sequentiality of events such as processions, he emphasizes linear continuity by placing miniatures on separate pages that follow one another. To underline the effect of simultaneity, he employs a direction of movement that starts from the extreme sides of the miniatures and moves toward the middle, a technique he used in the two-page miniatures (Tansuğ, 1993: 62). By these means, Levnî manages to construct a continuous visual story in fragments that come together via montage.

According to Tansuğ (1993: 40) as well as Atil (1993), the viewer's experience of the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* resembles a cinematic

encounter. They point out that, facilitated by the organic act of turning the pages, the miniature series flows like the unraveling of a film before the viewer's eyes.[95]

Atil suggests that

> Levnî was not only a master storyteller but also a remarkable book designer, using his paintings like a modern moviemaker. He employs such techniques as flashback, wide-angle and close-up views, pause and acceleration, devising both repetitive and unique compositions to enliven the pace of his narrative, while retaining an overall cohesive and integrated scheme. (1993: 184)

In fact, the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* consists of a set of images enfolding in linear temporality across a diegetic horizon. The first miniature introduces the protagonists by means of a unique "panning" toward the left; the next miniature offers up a wide-angle view of the set in which most of the events will take place; and the third work provides a medium shot of the administrative staff in the previously empty festival terrain. The "sequence shot" of the sultan's procession marching toward the festival ground not only inaugurates the celebrations but also puts the miniature series in motion—a motion that will continue until the events are brought to a close with the final shot of the sultan throwing out coins in Topkapi palace. The events unravel through a "montage" of highly static images alternating with those showing motion; the images with linear movements are accompanied by those with spiral and diagonal trajectories; and day shots are joined by night shots. This montage of "attractions" is occasionally interrupted by written texts, which serve in our cinematic analogy as extended intertitles.

Indeed, we may read the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* through the lens of cinematic practices and techniques. There are of course limitations to such an analysis, which depends on merely juxtaposing the practices of a film director and a painter. However, Sergei M. Eisenstein's discussions of the relation between cinema and painting provide a stimulating perspective that goes beyond mere juxtaposition. Eisenstein suggested that it "seems that all the arts, throughout the centuries, tended toward cinema. Conversely, cinema helps us to understand their methods" (quoted in

[95] Kuban also hints at the connection between the structure of film and the miniatures series briefly. He writes that Levnî imposed his work on the studio workers who understood the illustrations "[…] exactly like a feature-length animated film today" (2000).

Bois, 1989: 112). This formulation's teleological tone notwithstanding, Eisenstein's understanding is quite nuanced. Yve-Alain Bois defines Eisenstein's method of the "cinematographic grid of interpretation" as follows:

> Sequentiality and montage, defined by Eisenstein as the two essential conditions of film as a medium, became for him a grid for the apprehension of literature (Dickens, Diderot, Tolstoy, Zola, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky) and, most of all, of painting and the graphic arts. But far from partaking of a search for legitimation—the kind of hunting for "precursors" that became the common occupation of historians of ideas—Eisenstein's totalizing interpretations jeopardize notions of historical filiations or influences to propose instead a critical loop: the new methods of fi1m can help to explain Gogol or Bach, but the contrapunctal montage of these latter can, in turn, function as a propaedeutic model for the analysis of *Potemkin*. (1989: 112)

Eisenstein also traced the operation of sequentiality and montage in the realm of painting by discussing works by Russian painters Surikov and Serov, as well as the European artists Robert Delaunay, El Greco, and Munch, among others. This is not surprising since cinema is discussed as "the contemporary phase of painting" in Eisenstein's theoretical work (Montani, 2003: 206).

However, Eisenstein's statement does not entail a progressive understanding of the arts; rather, as Pietro Montani notes, it stresses cinema's inheritance of certain problems from painting that in general concern what we call "visual representation," instead of "emphasizing the specificity [….] of the new technological instrument" (2003: 206). For Eisenstein, there is a substantial continuity between painting and cinema because both of them belong to a "*problematic tradition of representation* and have to do with a certain body of problems that have been handed down to the figurative arts over time" (206). In this respect, works of art often assume "the task of 'putting-in-image'" the constant problems of representation so as to grapple with these problems in order to achieve effects of meaning. Therefore, cinema is a "good" invention, "not because its material technique enables, for example, the representation of movement and temporality, but rather because the problems of movement and temporality, which have always been two of the great problems of representation, can be put 'in-image' in cinema" (207).

I contend that the miniatures of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* take on the task of tackling the constant problems of representation within their specific medium. As the miniatures set out to depict a series of events, the question of representing movement and temporality appears to be a vital problem. Through the articulation of these representational problems this series of miniature paintings may encounter cinematic imagery. However, this approach does not rely on a strict comparison or analogy between two distinct media. Rather, it dwells on the critical loop of interpretation in which concepts relevant to and elucidated by cinema and cinematic experience help us better explain the ways in which the miniatures of *Sûrname* represent the festival as an event.

The miniature sequence depicting the arrival of the sultan's procession at the festival arena exemplifies the ways in which the miniatures deal with the representation of temporality and movement. Because the subject matter of the series is a massive procession marching from the Old Palace to *Ok Meydani* (from Sultan Ahmet square to the Bayezid district in today's Istanbul), the issue of representing motion in expanding representational dimensions of space and time becomes significant. Perhaps because of the pressing difficulty of capturing such a massive event, Levnî employs a structure that is unique in the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting and spreads the procession into three successive pages consisting of six individual panels. This visual strategy breaks the procession into a sequence—consisting of beginning, middle, and end—and culminates with a spatial and temporal expansion, all the while articulating, simultaneously, a force of motion by means of what we can call a simple linear montage. In this respect, the series provides us with a "case" through which Eisenstein's critical loop can be put into operation. In this process, filmic concepts such as the still and the out-of-field can help to better understand how the cuts dividing the miniatures produce an effect of spatio-temporal expansion and motion that allows the visualization of the procession as an event.

The Sultan's Procession in Two Takes

The poet Vehbi describes the day of the sultan's arrival at the festival grounds as follows:

> "As was the customary practice, all the grandees of state, the leaders of the Ulema, professors, and mullahs, and all the members of the Imperial Council who had been invited hied themselves to the festival ground the day before" to take part in the ceremony of greeting and congratulating the sultan when he arrived. [….] At eleven o'clock on the 18th, everyone "flocked to the guest tents in respect of their ranks and took up residence there dressed in formal garb and arrayed in a serried and unbroken line while His Excellency the Sheikhulislam—may God grant him good health—dressed in his awesome turban and white furs withdrew into a corner of the tent assigned to him awaiting the moment when he would come forth and kiss the hem of the sultan's robe." The sultan, who had left Topkapi Palace earlier in the morning was approaching Okmeydani in a huge procession.[96]

The huge procession referred to by Vehbi is represented in three double-page miniatures (13b-16a) that make up the fourth illustrated folio encountered by the viewer after opening the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*. This particular miniature sequence, signaling the beginning of the celebrations, puts the story of the festival in motion. It is also a miniature version of the circumcision ceremony that occurs at the end of the book. In this sense, the real festival takes place in these two parades, as if it had been put in motion between the two brackets.

The three double-page miniatures of the procession show scenes taking place in a deserted, ocherish landscape with hills and scattered trees in the background. Stylized Chinese clouds hang in the clear blue sky. Emigrating birds signal the end of summer. The beginning of the procession is shown in folio 13b (Figure 14).

[96] The text is taken from the notes by Tulum (2000), who also transliterated the text into the Latin alphabet and translated it into modern Turkish. The sentences in quotation marks are translations of Vehbi's original text.

Followed by four white eunuchs on horseback, the *Akağa*, accompanied by personal guards carrying daggers, leads the procession.[97]

In the second frame (14a), we see four mounted sergeants of the Imperial Council bearing silver staffs and wearing white-crested turbans. Following them is a contingent of *bostanjis*—seven officers (four mounted, three on foot) wearing red cloth caps.[98] This last group of figures on the edge of the second folio re-appears in the first row of the following frame (14b, Figure 13). Two mounted officers of the Privy Stables follow them. In the center of the parade, flanked on both sides by white-crested *solaks* and by *peyks* armed with lances and graced with tall, gilded caps, march the riderless imperial horses.[99]

The fourth panel (15a, Figure 13) includes more *solaks*, *peyks,* and spare horses. The masters of the horses, dressed in patterned silk kaftans, appear at the left edge of the panel. The final miniature set brings the sultan into view, albeit hidden among the sea of guards (15b and 16a, Figure 12). He is mounted on a grey horse fitted with golden and jeweled trappings. The assistant master of the Privy Stables, wearing a white conical cap, marches in front of the sultan and looks back toward him. To his left and right are the *Bostanji* grandmaster's lieutenant and his assistant. Marching immediately behind the ruler are the eight "stirrup *solaks*," guardsmen who were trusted highly enough to be allowed to come within arm's reach of the sultan. Everything is enclosed on both sides by lines of *peyks* armed with lances and of *solaks* armed with bows. The three turbaned figures in the lower left corner presage the second plane (16a), which shows the remaining contingents of the procession in a rather anticlimactic manner. The red-capped horseman carrying a sword is the sultan's sword-bearer. Riding beside him is the chief of the "stirrup *ağas*," the sultan's equerries. Before them march some *Enderun ağa*s, accompanied by more *bostanjis* in their bright red cloth caps. The last contingent is led by the chief of the Black Eunuchs, dressed in a yellow, fur-lined *kaftan* and escorted by *Bostanji* sergeants in conical caps. The number of figures on the left page then decreases

[97]The *Akağa* is the Chief of the White Eunuchs, who is the head of the *Enderun*, the part of the palace under the sultan's private administration.

[98]The *bostanjis* were mainly responsible for maintaining and safeguarding the grounds of imperial residences and thus served as the sultan's household guards.

[99] *Solak*s were janissaries from the 60th, 61st, 62nd, and 63rd regiments who served as the sultan's personal guards. *Peyk*s were also special personal guards.

dramatically to indicate the end of the parade. Here the movement slows down, an effect augmented by the open sky and the cleavage between the hills.[100]

My double encounter with the miniatures of the procession caused me to feel a sense of visual disorientation and piqued my intellectual curiosity. This experience prompted me to analyze the series in depth. In *Levnî ve Sûrname: Bir Osmanli Senliğinin Öyküsü* (Levnî and the Sûrname: The Story of an Ottoman Festival, 1999), art historian Esin Atil employs quite an unusual technique of arranging a book and divides her monograph into two halves. The first part is devoted to a discussion of the social, cultural, and historical contexts within which the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* was produced. It is accompanied by cropped reproductions of the miniatures that show blown-up and isolated figures. It follows the direction of the Turkish alphabet (Latin), hence it is read from left to right. The second half consists of faithful reproductions of the miniatures, which are supplemented by short, informative texts. This section follows the orientation of Ottoman script (Arabic) and therefore has to be read from right to left. Ideally, the second half of the book should be opened from what is the back end for Latin-alphabet readers and read "from back to front" so as to view it in a way analogous to the orientation dictated by the original book. Therefore, what we know as the end of a book becomes the beginning of the second half and, for one accustomed to reading Latin-alphabet texts, creates the feeling that its pages are receding rather than moving forward.

The first half includes a manipulated reproduction of the miniature series showing the "Arrival of the Sultan to *Ok Meydani*," but this version strips the miniatures of their individual frames and attaches them to each other as if they were part of a single image (Atil, 1999: 58-9, Figure 15). Atil justifies the manipulation of the miniature series by mentioning that Levnî may have initially produced this series as a frieze that was later cut into single miniatures and then pasted on the pages in separate frames (1999: 56). The discrepancy between this single miniature and the original series is significant because it highlights the ways in which the series deals with the representation of time, space, and movement; hence it deserves close scrutiny. The cropped reproduction discards the fact that the miniature series in the original book cannot be contemplated as a whole simultaneously.

[100] This descriptive account of the procession miniature series is more or less a paraphrase from Mertol Tulum's notes and comments on it (2000). I rely on his expertise in recognizing figures in relation to their rank by means of identifying their costumes.

Figure 12. The end of the procession of the sultan, Sûrname-i Vehbi, Levnî, 1727/8-1732, Topkapi Museum, (A. 3593, f. 16-15b).

Reproduced from Atil, 1999, p. 233-35.

Figure 13. The middle of the procession of the sultan, Sûrname-i Vehbi, Levnî, 1727/8- 1732,

Topkapi Museum, (A. 3593, f. 15a -14b). Reproduced from Atil, 1999, p. 236-37.

Figure 14. The beginning of the procession of the sultan, Sûrname-i Vehbi, Levnî, 1727/8- 1732, Topkapi Museum, (A. 3593, f. 14a-13b).

Reproduced from Atil, 1999, p. 238-39.

Intended to be part of a book, the series is designed to be seen sequentially; it adopts the form of an enfolding pictorial narrative that is perhaps more akin to Chinese scroll paintings than to a frieze, as Atil suggests. In its original version, the procession "marches" in two ways: first, as the viewer moves her eyes from one miniature to the next, and second, as she turns the book's pages. The manipulated image, on the other hand, gives the viewer a stable, static image of a mass that has been captured all at once. Motion is suppressed in favor of a frozen total view that the viewer can contemplate without interference. Such a viewing experience, though, lacks what makes the original series extremely innovative: sequentiality.

Sequentiality is achieved through the placement of the miniatures of the series on subsequent pages without the intrusion of a textual interruption. The individual framing used for each miniature—even though the miniatures share the same folio—is an additional means to further this effect. As I will suggest in later chapters, Ottoman miniaturists did not refrain from deconstructing what we now conceive of as the normative status of the frame as that which sets the limits of a painting; in fact, they broke or expanded the pictorial frames at times.[101] Such visual techniques enabled the miniaturists to appropriate the whole page surface as the pictorial plane and thus push the medium of the book to its limits. However, it is important to note that this effort was hardly directed toward the unification of two pages through the removal of the individual frames of each miniature.[102]

Levnî's work does not diverge from the miniature painting tradition. He follows the compositional scheme set by Master Osman employed in the first illustrated *Sûrname* of 1582, in which the story unfolded in two separate miniatures mounted on opposite pages. Yet in the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* the formal continuity between the 1582 *Sûrname* miniatures is strengthened (Tansuğ, 1993: 31-32).

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[101] See, for example, "The Portrait of Sultan Ahmed III" discussed in Chapter 4; "The Campaign of King Timur against Sultan Husayn" discussed in Chapter 5; and "The Theological School of Gazanfer Ağa" miniature discussed in Chapter 6.

[102] The most persistent exceptions can be found in sixteenth-century miniatures such as those executed in Matrakci Nasuh's works: *Tarihi-i Feth-i Siklos ve Esturgon ve Ustunbelgrad* (Topkapi Seraglio Museum, H 1608) and *Beyan-i Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn* (Istanbul University Library, T5964), as well as in *Hünername* (Topkapi Museum, H1523) by Nakkash Osman and *Eğri Fetihnamesi* (Topkapi Museum, H.1609) by Nakkash Hasan, all of which include double-page miniatures. It should be noted that most of these miniatures, with the exception of those in *Eğri Fetihnamesi*, present either topographic images representing whole cities conquered by the sultans or depict huge battle scenes.

Figure 15. “The Procession.” Reproduced from Atil, 1999: 58-59.

In Levnî's work, several miniature frames function merely to physically disconnect otherwise compositionally somewhat unified picture planes mounted on different pages.[103] Tansuğ suggests that the relation between the individually framed miniatures can best be understood by comparing them to the poetic structure called *beyit* (couplet) used commonly in *Divan* literature. This form consists of two rhyming lines that, just like the double-page miniatures, cannot be separated from one another without losing meaning (1993: 32).

The procession miniatures innovatively revise the structural constraints of the medium of the book and challenge the restrictions of the tradition handed down to Levnî's atelier. In *The Logic of Sensation* (1981), Gilles Deleuze asserts that the painter never starts with a virgin surface; the canvas is always already filled with countless ambient clichés in the studio and beyond (2004: 11). Following Deleuze, John Rajchman argues that the canvas "starts off covered over with too many 'givens', too many 'probabilities'" which actually allow for the chance of "an 'après-coup' of strange new 'virtualities' unpredictable or unforeseeable." (1998: 60). To paint, one must come to see the surface "as 'intense', where 'intensity' means filled within the unseen virtuality of other strange possibilities" (60).

Similarly, the page on which the miniatures were to be executed was not empty for Levnî. It was, first of all, filled in by the visual tradition that compelled the miniaturist to follow certain forms, schemes, and structures. Nonetheless, the medium was also charged with "the unseen virtuality of other strange possibilities," which encouraged a move beyond the given pictorial arrangement. The miniature series pushes the conventional form of the visual "couplet" to assume an unpredictable structure that not only complicates the notion of pictorial unity but also produces an effect of sequentiality. The relation between miniatures in the procession series can best be understood as a unity articulated by forced division. The miniatures remain separate, but they are not isolated from one another. The pictorial frame no longer refers to the "limitative unity" of each miniature but to a "distributive unity" of all (Deleuze, 2004: 85).[104]

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[103] The miniatures are "The Night Show in the Golden Horn" (55b -56a), "Shows in Golden Horn" (92b-93a), and the closing miniatures of the book (174b-175a). The procession and the circumcision parade series can also be considered spatially and temporally unified.

[104] Of course, Deleuze is not referring to Ottoman miniature painting. Rather, he discusses Francis Bacon's use of the triptych as a way of going beyond "easel" painting (2004: 85). For the (anti-

This, I believe, should not be seen as a failure to manage a unified pictorial space under the Western standards set by the "tableau," as Tansuğ seems to suggest (1993: 32). [105] It should, rather, be understood as a way of coming to terms with the material constraints as well as potentialities of the medium so as to provide a resolution to the imperative question of how the procession can be represented as an event. The cut-off miniature fragments exceed their limiting function as the transporter of isolated meanings and relate to one another across a diegetic continuum. It is through the process of the horizontal expansion of meaning that the procession takes off and marches before the viewer in a sequential order.

This unpredictable or unforeseeable use of the medium to produce an effect of sequentiality is also a means of coming to terms with the problematic tradition of visual representation mentioned by Eisenstein. In the next section, I argue that the cuts between the miniatures have a "filmic" touch to them that allows the series to inflate spatially and temporally. Two cinematic notions, the still and the "out-of-field," are helpful to understand the ways in which the series articulates the problem of representing the procession's spatial and temporal configuration. In what follows, I will dwell on the notion of the filmic still developed by Roland Barthes and on Deleuze's notion of the out-of-field so as to inquire into the operation of the leaps between the single images. These two notions allow me to explore the critical loop mentioned by Eisenstein so as to scrutinize how the series put the predicament of the "pictorial" in the picture.

The Still

In *Peinture et Cinema: Décadrages* (1985), Pascal Bonitzer suggests that the relationship between painting and cinema cannot be built on an analogy. Instead, Bonitzer proposes proceeding from two hypotheses. First, he argues that, technically speaking, cinema has inherited the scientification of representation founded in the Renaissance by means of theories concerning *perspectiva artificialis* (8). Secondly, he contends that cinema inherited the problems of painting and, in return, the

)narrative function of Bacon's triptych, see Ernst van Alphen (1990).

[105] For the notion of the tableau in relation to miniature painting, see chapter 5.

cinematographic solutions to these problems influenced the painting of the twentieth century (8). Through notions such as *le plan-tableau* and *décadrage*, he discusses filmic and pictorial works that illustrate the mutual cross-fertilization between the two media.[106]

Similarly, for Eisenstein there is also a significant continuity between painting and cinema in the sense that the latter inherits problems from painting concerning visual representation. For him, many works of art present themselves as exemplifications of their productivity (Montani, 2003: 206). Each medium deals with the problems of visual representation in myriad different ways, offering solutions that are innovative though not necessarily "better" than those of other media. In this sense, cinema articulates the problem of the representation of motion and temporality in such a way that these "two of the great problems of representation" can be "reunderstood" (Montani, 2003: 207).

One instance of such re-understanding is Eisenstein's analysis of the *Portrait of Marija Nikolaevna Ermolova* (1905) by Valentin Serov. Eisenstein argues that the "mysterious essence of the impact [of] this portrait" is attained by means of composition, which invokes the act of montage (1980: 224).[107] According to him, the portrait is composed of four successive "takes" that cut the representational space into four sections and presents them as if each were "shot" from a different angle (the first being from above, the last from below). He suggests that "a conventional representation of space [obtained] by simple cuts of frame [*le cadre*] is typical and well known in cinematographic practice" (227), and that for the portrait, this technique is put in the image in a distinctive manner. The four successive takes and their accumulation in the Ermolova portrait yield to the amplification of representational space and produce a sensation of movement. The passage from one shot to the other "image" of Ermolova dominates an ever-expanding space (231).

[106] Recently, numerous studies of the relation between cinema and painting have been published. A few of them, such as Dalle Vacche (1996) and Walker (1993), focus on the representation of painting and painters in cinema. Another category of investigation concentrates on the relationship between modern art movements and cinema; see Richardson (2006). Additionally, Anne Hollander's *Moving Pictures* (1991) searches through art history for the paintings, which are as she calls it "proto-cinematic," that gave way to moving image. Aumont (1989) focuses on the reciprocal influences between cinema and painting in terms of spatial disposition, framing, expression, lighting, and representation of time as well as considers the spectator's role and place in front of the two different media.

[107] All translations from the French version of Eisenstein's text are mine.

However, these four points of view do not refer to a successive appearance of the "object"; rather, they are four positions ascribed to the eye of the spectator (230). In this sense, the takes do not resolve into an illusion of movement or a dynamization of the figure. On the contrary, "the movement has been *expelled* out of the representation" and has been transferred to the eye of the observer, who contemplates the paining from above and, following an arc, proceeds until she comes to the feet of the figure (Montani, 2003: 212).

This analysis illustrates how Eisenstein puts his interpretative grid into operation so as to read individual paintings. According to Eisenstein's interpretation, the portrait of Ermolova gains its efficacy by means of an act of montage and hence through sequentiality and accumulation; but, because we are dealing with numerous images arranged sequentially, the miniature series offers us a different path. In this respect, each miniature can be considered a "take" that provides the viewer with a fragment of the work's representational space. Each of these panels captures a shot of a different segment of the procession, and each segment involves a new set of figures. Therefore, the miniature panels do not show us the consecutive progression of movement of each figure; rather, they are concerned with the motion of a mass in a given space.

We may argue that each miniature take in the series gives us a "still" that corresponds to an instance of the procession. Through the conjunction of these stills the viewer apprehends the unity of the series distributed throughout the whole and takes in as well the *image* of the procession. In cinema theory, the still is defined as an isolated static moment extracted from the film that exposes a certain "privileged" instant within the whole. As such, the still is a "remote sub-product of the film, a sample [….] technically, a reduction of the work by immobilization of what is taken to be the sacred essence of cinema—the movement of the images" (Barthes, 1977: 66). In the final section of his notorious article "The Third Meaning," Roland Barthes states that he is "intrigued by the phenomenon of being interested and even fascinated" by a film still featured in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, a response that he at first ascribes to his lack of cinematic culture (1977: 66).

Soon enough, though, he turns the statement upside down and argues that the still, in fact, reveals the inherent nature of what he calls the "filmic." He proposes that "[t]he filmic is not the same as the film, is as far removed from the film as the novelistic is from the novel" (65). The filmic, "very paradoxically, cannot be grasped

in the film 'in situation', 'in movement', 'in its natural state', but only in that major artifact, the still" (65). Hence, the still is a point of departure for Barthes from which he can go on to articulate a previously inarticulable "obtuse meaning" that appears to extend "outside of culture, knowledge, information" (55). This meaning belongs only to the filmic image, which can be captured only by means of the stills.[108]

Certainly, my object is different from Barthes' in his discussion of the still. While Barthes inquires into the filmic by isolating the stills, I concentrate on the miniatures by regarding them as stills that give way to an understanding of what can be called the "pictorial." As I conceive it, the miniatures are similar to stills in the sense that they construct the procession by displaying a few privileged instances. However, they do not capture the march as a whole but present certain sections of it in isolation. Hence the procession perceived by the viewer is not a sum total of the miniatures' fragments but rather an extensive image that encompasses the relation between the stills as well as that which falls out of each frame. If we return to the manipulated reproduction published in Esin Atil's book, the issue at stake might become clearer. In this reproduction the procession is given as a closed system governed by a definite, unified representational space and temporal structure. In contrast, the original set of miniatures brings forth an open whole that is not equal to the accumulation of the "fragments" of the individual miniatures. That is to say, the idea of the procession that the viewer acquires from the series is not identical to what is represented in each take. In this sense, the miniatures can be conceptualized as stills that make up the visible portion of the procession, which actually stretches beyond what is represented as content.

Barthes makes three arguments regarding the nature of the filmic still that I consider relevant for my discussion. First, following Eisenstein, he suggests that "[t]he still offers us the *inside* of the fragment," which brings about "a syntagmatic disjunction of images and calls for a vertical reading of the articulation" (67). Hence, the still encourages a process of close reading of the elements in the image and discourages the viewer from concentrating on the elements between shots. My reading, however, relies on both horizontal *and* vertical readings that are keen to reflect on the continuity as well as the disjunction between the stills. Therefore,

[108] Barthes claims that the third meaning cannot be attributed to photography and painting because neither has a diegetic horizon.

instead of merely reading into the image, through the notion of the still I am able to analyze the series inside and across, as well as in between, the miniatures.

Second, Barthes argues that the still is not a sample but a quotation. The meaning it engenders is supplementary, excessive; it is "parodic and disseminatory" (67). In this respect, "film and still find themselves in a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top* of the other or that one is *extracted* from the other" (67). Similarly, I regard each miniature as a quotation from a larger image—that is, the whole *image* of the procession—and, as such, regard the miniatures as employing a technique of visual representation that effectively displays the whole "text" as if it were put in quotation marks. Yet the miniatures also disseminate themselves and open up to the whole across the diegetic horizon. In this capacity, the *image* of procession and the single stills indeed assume a palimpsestic relationship to one another: the stills are not extracted from the substance of the former, and similarly the procession as the whole cannot be interpreted solely by compiling the quotations and reading them together.

Finally, Barthes argues that the still "throws off the constraint of filmic time," which cannot "go faster or slower without losing its perceptual figure" (68). No doubt, the respective technical constraints of cinema and miniature painting are far removed from each other. Looking at paintings contains more similarities to the time of reading, which, as Barthes himself notes, is free. The arrangement of the miniatures in *Sûrname* puts forward a specific logical time-scheme that has a beginning and a definite end. Yet each miniature is deployed with its own inner temporality, thus instituting a reading that is instantaneous and vertical as well as horizontal, that grows in multiple directions, and that scorns the logical time of the procession.

An isolated, vertical reading of miniature stills allows us to recognize that the relation between individual miniatures is not one of horizontal continuity and unity. If we read each still toward the inside through a syntagmatic disjunction as well as continuation—which I have done briefly in the preceding section—we realize that the miniatures do not strictly follow one another. For example, the second miniature in the series starts with a whole new set of figures that do not complement the missing parts of the figures in the last row of the first fragment (Figure 14). These missing parts indicate a temporal and spatial break between the two stills. There is a part of the parade that has gone astray and cannot be visually recuperated. The third

miniature of the series, placed on the following page, follows the same principle of dissociation and extends it through a compositional difference. Here, we have more figures surrounding one of the royal horses. The third and fourth miniatures have a figural continuity that was not employed in the other miniatures (Figure 13). We see the head of the royal horse cut by the frame of the right miniature continuing on the left page, where we see its backside covered with ornamented cloth over which the saddle is mounted. Soon enough, this association is broken by the discontinuity of the other figures above and below the head of the horse on the right-hand side.

The fifth miniature, within which we finally have the privilege of seeing the sultan, is the most crowded of all, comprising forty figures (Figure 12). The most interesting figure is that of the *peyk* (archer) at the bottom right of the miniature, whose right leg and arm are visible as well as half of his uniform (Figure 16). This faceless half-figure, who is about to disappear from the picture plane, gives us one of the powerful yet hardly visible moments of dissociation between the miniatures. He will not appear—or has not appeared, according to the viewing sequence—in the previous miniature. He is lost in the missing part of the parade.

Figure 16. Detail, *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, (f. 15b-15a).

The right frame of the sixth and final miniature cuts the figures that are casually spread around the last high-ranking officer, Darüssaade Ağasi (Figure 14).[109] The

[109] Please note that I have manipulated the detail from the procession by bringing the frames of the

decelerated movement and scattered figures announce the end of the parade, yet the viewer is invited to imagine that more figures might be involved in the parade, even if they are not represented. Although the following miniature (17b) will take the viewer to the festival arena, where all the high administrators, including the grand vizier, are waiting for the sultan's arrival, we can assume that the parade encompasses more than has been depicted in the miniature series.

The missing portion lost in between the miniatures can be called a "visual ellipsis." According to the *OED*, an ellipsis is "the omission of one or more words in a sentence, which would be needed to complete the grammatical construction [….] fully to express the sense." Accordingly, I suggest that the cut between the miniatures functions similar to the way a grammatical ellipsis works. These cuts embody the technical solutions (as omissions) devised by Levnî when dealing with the problems of representing the procession as an event that expands spatially and temporally. Ironically, these ellipses make a statement about the "nature" of the pictorial *in absentio*. These spaces of omission invite the viewer to fill in the void between the miniature stills so as to complete the miniature series. First, the imaginary inclusion of the missing partitions via the performance of the viewer expands the representational space. Second, it brings forth a temporal extension that goes beyond the temporal configuration invested within the stills. The ellipses thus enable the series to convey a much larger fragment of time and space than is depicted in the miniature fragments. It does so by means of the "out-of-field."

The Out-of-Field: Expanding Space and Time

In my view, the miniatures' visual ellipses are filled in by the operation of the "out-of-field" (*hors-champ*). Gilles Deleuze offers one of the most innovative definitions of this concept's function when he states that it refers to what is not framed by the camera, hence "what is neither seen nor understood, but [….] nevertheless [is] perfectly present" (2003a: 16). Certainly, Deleuze does not refer to the outside of a still. For Deleuze, in opposition to Barthes and Eisenstein, the images of painting and cinema are inherently different, particularly in the ways in which they incorporate

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miniatures on different pages next to each other so as to emphasize the missing partition between the two.

and represent movement. He contends that pictorial images are "nevertheless immobile in themselves so that it is the mind which has to 'make' movement." The cinematographic image, on the contrary, "'makes' movement [.…] [I]t makes what the other arts are restricted to demanding (or to saying), it brings together what is essential in the other arts; it inherits it, it is as it were the directions for use of other images, it converts into potential what was only possibility" (2003b: 156). It is by means of such potentiality that cinema can produce vibrations that affect the viewer's mind and initiate a process of thought and, eventually, affect. In this sense, for Deleuze, as he explicitly put forward in two volumes on cinema, cinema is a manner of thinking (1993a; 1993b). However, these books do not attempt to establish a theory "about cinema." Rather, they elaborate "the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices, the practice of concepts in general having no privilege over others, anymore than one object has over the others" (2003b: 280).[110] His approach, then, opens up a space for interdisciplinary work: it creates concepts related to the cinematic experience that can and do travel, as exemplified by my conceptualization of the spaces in between the miniature series of the procession in the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*.

For Deleuze, the "outside" is all that the camera does not frame as "in-field." As is well known, the framing of the camera—producing that which is seen on the screen—is different than the framing of a painting. André Bazin suggests that the surrounding frame of a painting offers "a space the orientation of which is inward, a contemplative area opening solely on the interior of painting" (2003: 222). What is framed by the camera, on the contrary, "seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely to the universe"; hence, Bazin concludes, the frame of the painting is centripetal whereas the frame of the cinema is centrifugal (222). As Aumont notes, Bazin's comparison suggested that while "the off-screen was natural, even essential, to the filmed images, it was all but forbidden in painting" (1997: 169). Yet, Aumont goes on to argue that the "unframed" elements in painting can imply an "awareness of what is happening outside of the image," such as when Degas cuts off his subjects at the edge of the frame (169). After stating that there is still an important difference between the operation of the out-of-field in cinema and in

[110] In *Cinema 1* Deleuze writes: "This book does not set out to produce a history of the cinema but to isolate certain cinematographic concepts" (1993a: ix).

painting—the out-of-field in cinema can always be actualized—he refers to Jean Mitry's reading of Bazin's essay in which Mitry suggests that "a sequence of paintings, of multiple images, produces off-screen effects just as well as film does" (quoted in Aumont, 1997: 171). Even though Aumont considers Mitry's argument partly convincing, as "this type of off-screen space is much less powerful and immediate than that seen in films," I contend that the procession miniatures give us a persuasive example of the operation of the out-of-the-field in painting.

Deleuze contends that what falls out of the frame (of the camera) constitutes a larger set, or "a plane [*plan*] of genuinely unlimited content" (2003a: 16). Yet Deleuze's expansion of the framed toward the unlimited is not comparable to Bazin's claim of reality. Deleuze talks about an unlimited extension within the cinematic whole. He writes that all framing determines an out-of-field and therefore, "when a set is framed, therefore seen, there is always a larger set, or another set with which the first forms a larger one, and which can in turn be seen, on condition that it gives rise to a new out-of-field" (16). This deferral of the out-of-field is persistently at stake in the procession series, as each miniature seems to compensate for what is left outside of the frame of the preceding and /or following work without ever managing to make "the whole lot" appear in-field. The frame of the first section, omitting certain parts of the figures it frames, indicates that it leaves out a larger set, which is not put in the picture in the following frame. This left-out segment constructs the out-of field of each miniature still, which, though not actualized, is entirely present. The following miniature fragment does not actualize the out-of-field created by the first miniature but depicts yet another section of the procession only to bring about a new out-of-field, and so on.

Aumont points out that the out-of-field is "the assemblage of the elements (characters, decors, etc.) which is not included in the field is nevertheless imaginarily attached to it by the spectator by any means" (1987: 15).[111] This performance of the viewer contributes to the work's spatial expansion and temporal prolongation. The simple function of the out-of-field, as Deleuze puts it, is that of adding space to space, and this function is better fulfilled when the thread that links the visible set to other, unseen sets is thicker (17). In the miniatures, the ever-present content (that is, the marching mass) already constitutes a thread—not only between

[111] My translation.

the stills that are seen but also across those that are unseen. It sustains the diegetic space within which the out-of-field is inserted. Each out-of-field adds a segment of non-actualized representational space. This virtual space extends in between the pictorial space of the miniature panels and contains an indefinite "content" unless its indeterminate void is cut and filled with the next miniature.

However, there exists an even "finer" thread concealed in the series. This thread is clandestinely carried off by a few figures in each miniature that "turn back" and look behind in the direction of the miniature that comes next. This hidden string of looks is initiated in the first image by the *ağa* on horseback who, at the lower left of the miniature plane, gently turns his head and glances behind him toward the outside of the miniature plane. In the second image, the look back is passed on to another *ağa* on horseback and is then transported to a regular guard behind him. In the next image, the look has spread to four different figures; while in the subsequent image, we see six of them turning toward the next miniature as if they were about to announce the appearance of the sultan. In the miniature containing the sultan, we have fewer figures making these sorts of looks. In the last image, we are left with three figures who direct us, ultimately, toward the total outside of the series.

Functioning on two levels, this thread of looks oscillates in emphasis between the continuity and the discontinuity between the images on the one hand and between the "in-field" and "out-of-field" on the other. First, it gives us what Mieke Bal calls a "line of sight." Bal suggests that paintings propose spectator positions that can be read into the image and, I would add, across images. These lines, however, in no way guarantee that the actual viewer will look along these lines; they can only be posited as aspects of the image (1991: 121). Even though it might easily pass unnoticed, once recognized the series of looks that leads the viewer across the miniatures from right to left reinforces the ordering of the pages that is set in opposition to the represented flow of movement. It appears throughout the entire length of the whole series. Sometimes it becomes condensed without ever assuming the prominent role of forming a principal element in the pictorial composition; at other times, it is only a minor feature. But it is always there, always providing the viewer with the means to identify the scene pictorially and to orient herself in relation to the overall movement enacted by the series. In this first sense, the string of looks provides linear continuity across the seen stills by directing the viewer's gaze.

Second, this internal thread also directs the viewer's eyes toward the leap

between the miniatures, to what I called the visual ellipsis. Each figure's reversed look falls into the respective out-of-field of each miniature still. Hence, such a look diverts the viewer's look and directs it to the jump between each image that cannot be superseded, but is imagined as present. Every reverted look encourages the viewer to look back with them and imagine what they would be seeing—in place of what is *not* visualized for the viewer. They remind viewers of the ellipses as well as invite a performative looking. In this capacity, the thread of looks opens up a contemplative space in two ways. First, it creates a space within which the represented gaze can travel beyond the frames of the miniature panels as far as the eyes of the figures can "see." Second, the space opened up by the travels of the represented gazes encourages the viewer to fill it in as it is hypothetically seen by each of the figures.

The most radical instance of the thread of looks occurs in the final segment of the series. In the last row of the left panel, we see the ultimate conductor of the line of looking: a guard with a conical hat and a red garment who turns his head backwards toward the place where the parade actually ends (Figure 17). However, this figure does not actually look in that direction; rather, he directs his eyes toward the viewer. By doing so, the final recipient of the thread of looks conveys the inner gaze no further. Instead, he transfers the look to the viewer, as if this line of sight has now escaped from the miniature series so as to reach out to the viewer. This final look opens up the procession to the here and now of the viewer, to the "radical" outside of representation.

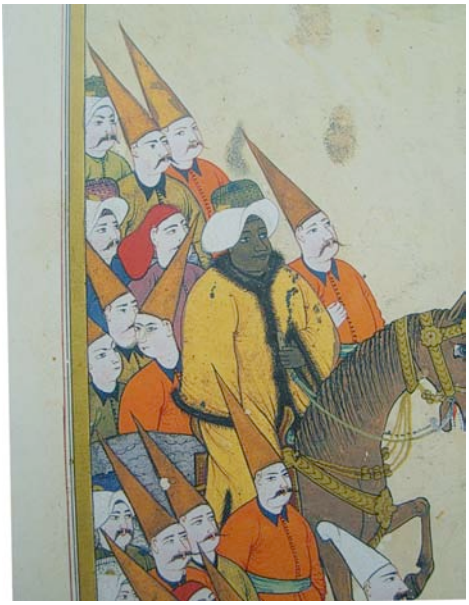

Figure 17. Detail, *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, (f. 16a).

Nevertheless, for the viewer who has not yet turned the page, the final still is an ordinary continuation of the procession. Only when she encounters the following miniature set depicting the festival arena can the returned gaze of the figure be taken as a sign that suggests the end of the procession. Such an unanticipated encounter with the final destination of the procession produces a confusion of the spatio-temporal structure of the series: the final row of the procession is closer to the ultimate destination than its beginning turns out to be. Actually, if we contemplate the series in its given order, the beginning of the procession is also directed toward the festival grounds, yet the preceding double miniature seems to depict the events of the prior day.[112]

In this sense, the miniature series provides the viewer with a vicious circle—rather than a horizontal line—and offers continuous temporal leaps and spatial dislocations. Only when the viewer sees the final segment of the march does the first

[112] It is likely that Levnî has reconstructed the actual schedule of the beginning of the festival. Mertol Tulum explains the discrepancy between Vehbi's text and Levnî's miniatures concerning "The arrival of Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha and his reception at the imperial pavilion" (13a-12b) that precedes the procession series thus: " If this scene is supposed to depict the arrival of the grand vizier on the day before the festival began, it is at variance with Vehbi's account, which makes no mention of such a ceremony telling us merely that İbrahim Pasha arrived at *Okmeydani* on the afternoon of September 17th [….] In view of what Vehbi tells us, the grand vizier's arrival in procession and his reception at the imperial pavilion must have taken place after the sultan's arrival. According to the text of *Sûrname*, the sultan arrived on the first day of the festival and, after the customary ceremony before the imperial pavilion, took up residence in his own tent after which everybody assumed their places for a second ceremony in which the grand vizier set out from his own pavilion and proceeded with his entourage to where the sultan was waiting" (2000).

row of the procession reach the festival arena—and yet the beginning of the march perpetually arrives at the festival arena a day in advance. In this respect, the procession never arrives at its final destination. It constantly closes in on itself as a continuous loop, one that moves *ad infinitum* in a temporal and spatial stratum that continuously repeats itself.

The construction of the procession in successive individuated stills with their respective out-of-fields, along with the critical placement of the series between the preceding and subsequent miniatures, constitutes an image of the procession as an eternal loop. If we turn back to Eisenstein's core problematic of representation, we can suppose that the effect of the eternal loop is the solution devised by Levnî to represent a massive procession without reducing it to a static linear crowd bound by the limits of the page. The miniature series makes use of the medium of the book, which actually allows such sequentiality, in order to inflate the series spatially and temporally into reaches outside its material constraints.

In the following section, I suggest that this expansion of the progression is accompanied by an effect of perpetual motion. This is achieved by expelling motion from the miniatures and locating it in between the intervals between the stills. In this capacity, the series does not represent an illusion of movement; rather, it presents motion as an idea. Such endorsement of movement accords with the ceaseless spatio-temporal looping of the series and culminates with the presentation of the procession as an event that, rather than ever arriving at a particular destination, is an ever-becoming occurrence.

The Interval: Putting the Stills in Motion

In *Moving Pictures* (1991), Anne Hollander identifies paintings that set out what she calls a "proto-cinematic" imaginary. This particular kind of painting, which she attributes largely to Northern European artists, "seems to be in motion even while it does not move, seems to be showing a much larger section of time than the frame can contain and seems to invite our participation in the movement of its potential narrative" (4). By means of particular uses of light, shade, and compositional space, proto-cinematic paintings set "the viewer's psyche in motion, reveal arbitrarily rather than describe thoroughly, disturbs more than it satisfies, and strongly suggests the

impossibility of seeing everything at once"(7). Such paintings, according to Hollander, prefigure the way movies work as pictures in the modern world (7).

Hollander's work is devoted to the discussion of pictorial techniques that, deployed in individual paintings, create a sense of motion in the viewer. Carla Gottlieb (1958) notes that the painter who cannot "perform" movement on the canvas is challenged to find a substitute, a technique that can represent movement. She sketches out pictorial devices such as *instability* (the use of elements in unstable positions), *enactment* (the portrayal of more than one moment in a movement), *striving forces* (elements that strive with each other either because of incompatibility with or attraction away from other elements in the composition such as structural ambiguity), and *the symbol* (figures such as the dancer, the tightrope walker, the equilibrist). Rather than depicting a frozen *moment* of movement, painters can represent through such techniques an *event* of motion by juxtaposing many moments within a single frame.

Indisputably, in its creation of an illusion of motion, Levnî's figuration employs none of the techniques mentioned above. The single miniatures do not give the viewer the illusion of successive moments experienced by a figure in time, an effect that would prompt the viewer to think successively as well as simultaneously. The first miniature in the series involves some thirty figures headed toward the alleged festival arena. Each figure in the foreground has their left foot in front of their right one, as if the group was marching *en masse*. Their bodies' position is dictated by the frozen movement of the left foot and comes to face the viewer in *three-quarter* postures. Some have their heads turned backwards; others look at each other; yet most have their eyes fixed in the direction of what seems to be their final destination. The horses' raised left hooves strengthen this impression of directionality. Moreover, the migrating birds overhead emphasize the course of the movement in a background otherwise marked by stillness.

The figures with lifted feet and curved arms, along with the horses with raised hooves, provide the viewer with an instance of arrested and frozen movement that is cut abruptly. In this capacity, the miniature series represents ordinary moments that construct the flux of the procession through fragments. These fragments do not intend to produce an illusion of movement, yet, as I will argue later on, they articulate an idea of motion through the correlation among them. However, such an ordinary moment as represented in each miniature should not be confused

with the "any-instant-whatever" that can be captured either by photographic or cinematic means. Deleuze suggests that the cinema is the "system which reproduces movement as a function of equidistant instants, selected so as to create an impression of continuity" (1993a: 5). Therefore, for Deleuze, any other system that "reproduces movement through an order of exposures [*poses*] projected in such a way that they pass into one another," such as the procession miniature series, "is foreign to cinema" (5). Cinema reproduces movement by relating it to any-instant-whatever, whereas other forms, most notably painting and long-exposure photography, can reproduce movement only in forms of eternal poses or privileged instants (such as the pregnant moment); this is the crux of the difference between cinematic and non-cinematic representations of movement.[113]

Certainly, the miniature series from the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* represents movement within each single image via eternal poses. They are immobile sections and hence do not produce movement as a process of being formed between equidistant instants. In this sense, the miniature series is incontestably foreign to the cinematic experience because it reproduces movement through an ordering of exposures [*poses*]. Then again, Deleuze reminds us that his theory concerns the concepts raised by cinema, which are related to other concepts that correspond in turn to other practices. His understanding underlines the itinerary of cinematic concepts and thereby enables me to bring them to bear on pre-cinematic objects conceived in distant cultures of the past.

Another cinematic term—namely, "montage"—might help us to understand the ways in which the ordinary moments depicted in the series give way to an idea of motion. The founder of montage theory, Eisenstein, insisted that montage is a universal semantic and expressive process as much present in poetry as in film or the plastic arts (Aumont, 1997: 178). Aumont suggests that Eisenstein's theory of montage "could be applied more successfully to still images" as exemplified by one of Eisenstein's favorite examples, Watteau's *Embarquement pour Cythère* (1717), which "he reads as a cinematic sequence showing several successive stages in a generic love story: the couple sitting on grass, getting up, then moving to the boat" (178). However, the miniature series concerns multiple images and their assemblage and accumulation as a cycle. In this sense, the act of montage here is not so much

[113] I discuss the notion of the pregnant moment in Chapter 5.

like Watteau's painting but, perhaps, is more indebted to the montage employed by comic strips.

In his essay "A Reading of Steve Canyon" (1976), Umberto Eco argues that in comics the relationship between one frame and the next is governed by what he calls "montage rules." He writes,

> montage in comics is different from a film, which merges a series of stills into a continuous flux. The comic strip on the other hand, breaks up the stories [sic] *continuum* into a few essential components. Obviously the reader welds these parts together in his imagination and then perceives a continuous flow. (quoted in Little, 2007)

Taking up Eco's insight, Ben Little suggests that between the two panels of comics, the reader constructs an "imaginary third" where the action takes place (2007). The notion of the imaginary third is similar to Eisenstein's definition of montage as "an *idea* that derives from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another" (Lindop, 2007). The "intellectual montage," as Eisenstein called it, is the juxtaposition of two terms (shots), which leads to a concept. That is to say, the meaning is articulated in between two (or more) images, within what is called the "interval." The interval is, in Aumont's words, the *jump* between successive shots, be they still or moving; in any case they are *multiple* images. It concerns not "what unites two shots, but their interaction, in other words, the way they are separated" (1997: 179).

In this sense, the interval does not refer to the outside of the frame, as I have discussed in the previous section. I have argued that the distance between the miniatures is filled with the out-of-field, which the viewer perceives without being able to see. The out-of-field achieves its function of adding space to space as well as of temporally stretching the viewing experience. Therefore, the encounter with the series amounts to a more complicated viewing experience than the initially envisioned whole. In this respect, the operation of the out-of-field is contingent on the representational coordinates of the in-field.

The interval, however, concerns the interaction between images. Jonathan Beller describes the interval as

> a term derived from music that specifies the space/time between notes or passages, names the cinematic juxtaposition of two social moments between which the viewer must supply the intervening elements. Thus, "it is a philosophical and conceptual term, specifying a construction through the shaping of hollows or empty spaces or absences. (1999: 153, FN.3)

It is "a correlation of two images which are distant" (Deleuze, 2003a: 82). The interval enables the viewer to concentrate on the *proximity* between two seemingly separate and irrelevant things, beings, situations, and/or images, rather than contemplating the *distance* between the two.

Ulus Baker notes that the interval can be found even between words within a text; the "space" between them is never empty but is filled in with new words regardless of spatio-temporal distances. Similarly, a landscape painting "utters the word of the interval" by juxtaposing elements that would initially appear irrelevant (Baker). This understanding reminds us that the act of montage as the juxtaposition of different elements is not exclusive to cinema.[114]

The miniature series of the procession performs its visual potential, one can say with Deleuze, not only through visible images but also by means of juxtaposition and disassociation between the miniatures as an act of montage. The passage from one panel to the other is mediated by means of rupture as much as juxtaposition—as each miniature, in depicting a new set of figures, articulates its radical distance from the fragments that precede and follow it. In this sense, the cut between the stills articulates an intervallic space that functions as a "'suture', a shift, a blank or a transfer" that does not satisfy "the prejudices of our eyes" (Baker). This space makes the proximate images distant from one another while sustaining the correlation between them. In this respect, the function of the cuts between the miniatures resonates with the Vertovian interval, which according to Baker is "the true genetic element of the visible" that enables the shift from one visual impulse to the other.

Baker contends:

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[114] The term montage has been used to refer to the formal principle at work in many of the most distinctive cultural products of the twentieth century, including the hybrid dada images of George Grosz, the fragmented literary narratives making up Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, the episodic theatrical structure of Erwin Poscator's *Trotz Alledam*, the multi-layered exhibition spaces conceived by Frederik Kiesler, and the multi-exposure photographs of Edward Steichen and Barbara Morgan. See Lavin and Teitelbaum (1992).

> We can see more than images and movements, if we are situated in the dimension of the intervals. An interval is "in between" the images, just like rhythms and aberrant movements. "The school of cine-eye expects that the film should be built on 'intervals', that is, on the movement between the images [....] The intervals (passages from a movement to another) but never movements themselves are constituting the materials and the elements of the art of movement". (Baker)

I contend that the procession series invites the viewer to situate herself in the intervallic space in-between the miniatures. Indeed, in this space the viewer can "see" more than the ordinary moments and frozen movements depicted in the miniature stills. The intervallic space, I suggest, inhabits movement, not as a recording or representation of motion but as a force that can be felt. As such, the movement occurs not *in* the image but elsewhere: *in-between* the miniatures. This presupposes that we are no longer dealing with the "missing partition" as a logical continuation of the parade (as out-of-field), but rather with the intensity between the miniatures. As such, there is a move away from the figural constraints toward a density of movement between the images. However, it is not the figures themselves (marching men and horses) that move in the interval. Rather, it is the passage from one impulse to the other that produces the idea of motion. This non-representation of movement resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that

> Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception. Doubtless, thresholds of perception are relative; there is always a threshold capable of grasping what eludes another: the eagle's eye [....] But the adequate threshold can in turn operate only as a function of a perceptible form and a perceived, discerned subject. So that movement in itself *continues* to occur elsewhere: if we serialize perception, the movement always takes place above the maximum threshold and below the minimum threshold, in expanding or contracting intervals

> (microintervals). [….] What we must do is reach the photographic or cinematic threshold. (2004: 309)

The authors seek a cinematic threshold that would capture the fleeting nature of movement and affect for the perceiver. The miniature series, however, confirms that the movement of the procession indeed remains below and above perceptive thresholds. In this sense, in the miniature series the movement is located not in the miniature stills but in the intervallic spaces between them. Such a strategy does not involve representing what escapes from perception figurally; rather, it amounts to presenting motion as an idea. In this respect, the interval not only allows the viewer to perceive the non-perceiving (or the imperceptible) but also *presents* movement as an intensity that is articulated through links of correlation among the successive miniatures. In these intervallic spaces the procession is put in motion: the frozen figures of the march are granted a dynamism. Yet this is not a representational understanding of movement. The viewer does not envision the figures' stiff bodies stretching or their muscles extending. Instead, there is a tension or density articulated in the passage from one still to the other; it is an idea of motion rather than its representation.

This operation of the interval illustrates how the cut between miniature stills enables the viewer to experience the procession as an event rather than a static moment. I have argued in the previous section that the notion of the out-of-field allows us to comprehend the spatio-temporal expansion of the series. This expansion is further accompanied by a perpetual loop that makes the procession take place in constant flux. The sense of motion is brought about as an effect of the gap between successive miniatures, which is filled in by the viewer. The spatio-temporal expansion and the idea of motion produced in the productive gap between the stills constructs the procession as an event continuously passing before the viewer's eyes. In the following section, I argue that this articulation of the procession as an event serves to construct an imperial vision, a regime of looking that encourages the contemporary viewer to situate herself in a viewing position as one of the sultan's loyal subjects.

The Imperial Vision

In this section, I examine the viewing position evoked and encouraged by the series so as to understand how this event was constructed as an imperial one. At this stage, I shall summon my experience of the double encounter with the procession series that initially triggered the discussions presented above. Because I believe that the "point" of the series is to make the sultan visible for the viewer, I concentrate on the ways in which each set of images articulates the encounter with the sultan. The "real" procession in 1721 was one of the few instances in which the sultan was made available for public gaze. It was to some extent staged for the ordinary subjects of the empire. I contend that the procession miniatures display the spectacular procession of the sultan, yet this time I direct my inquiry to the sultan himself as the ultimate viewer of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* from the point of his subjects.[115]

The manipulated image discussed above attempts to capture the procession as a massive event. The removal of the frames separating the miniatures from each other indisputably gives the viewer a sense of a unified pictorial surface. Seen from enough of a distance, the parade can be conceived at a glance without the intrusion of figural discontinuities. The sequentiality introduced by the original series is lost; instead, what is imparted is the sense of an arrested moment that sums up the whole parade. The parade in this view is an integrated still without interruptions, gaps, or interludes to trigger the viewer's engaged participation. The reproduction suggests a spatio-temporal incarceration conditioned by simultaneity. The procession occupies a definite, coherent representational space, while the temporal succession of the original series culminates in a temporal unity in which the parade takes place in a single, coalesced moment of time. In this image, movement never happens; all movement has already taken place. The procession is presented as a static object of condensed contemplation.

Moreover, the direction of the procession is in harmony with the conventional viewing orientation, which enters the pictorial plane from the left-hand side. Such directionality of viewing read the procession from its end toward its beginning

[115] Most of the illustrated books were produced for the sultan and his family, high-ranking seraglio officers, and sometimes for province governors, for their private and individual use. Therefore, the position of the contemporary viewer is that of an intrusion of the "unintended viewer." I elaborate on this point further in Chapter 4.

without encountering any leaps or gaps. The act of looking thus encouraged is a smooth one that involves no interruptions, unlike the original series. Such a smooth process of viewing makes it even more difficult to recognize the figure of the sultan who is, in any case, hardly distinguishable in the crowd. He appears as a cinematic extra, as Kuban suggests (2000). Even though his presence is marked by the condensation of figures around him, his arrival is not anticipated. Under such viewing conditions, the viewer might easily pass by the figure of the sultan without noticing him.

The series, in contrast, offers a more convoluted viewing process, one that effects an "authentic" encounter with the sultan. I suggest that the fragmented miniature stills through which the viewer sees the procession in fragments create a viewing position similar to the experience of a bystander situated near the procession. The fragmented series provides the viewer with only a segment of the procession at any one moment, as if to recall to her that in "real" encounters one cannot perceive an event all at once. Exposed to an event such as a procession, the beholder cannot capture the movement of bodies at once, as Deleuze and Guattari contend: "like the huge Japanese wrestlers whose advance is too slow and whose holds are too fast to see, so that what embraces are less wrestlers than the infinite slowness of the wait (what is going to happen?) and the infinite speed of the result (what happened?)" (2004: 310). Similarly, when a viewer is situated near a marching procession, she cannot gaze at the whole; rather, she is left with fragmented impressions that resemble the images of the miniature stills.

Moreover, the arrangement of miniature pairs on separate pages complicates the viewing direction. The procession moves toward the right while the viewer has to orient herself toward the left, an orientation strengthened by the act of turning the pages. The viewer "moves" the parade by turning the pages—but she is simultaneously dislocated by the same action. In this respect, the parade and the viewer move in opposite directions, passing each other by. The viewing position advanced by the series is almost participative: the viewer is situated next to the parade and is encouraged to move in the other direction. Therefore, I suggest that the viewpoint reproduced in the series reenacts the position of a bystander who, being in

the vicinity of the procession, cannot comprehend the procession as a moment but rather must take it in as an event in fragments.[116]

In addition, the cuts and leaps between the miniatures anticipate the viewer's expectation of seeing the sultan. Each fragment brings her a step closer to being in the sultan's presence, yet his arrival is always deferred to the next miniature. The series builds up to the moment of encountering the sultan as the climatic moment of the whole series. Yet when the moment arrives, the sultan will be sealed off, as it were, by the figures who protect him from the gaze of the viewer as if he had been placed under the protection of a web of human shields. This anticipation of seeing the ruler, joined with his ultimate protection under the care of his guards, accords with my argument that the series reconstructs a bystander's perception of the event. What is imparted is a sensation of intensity—affect—hat would arise from an encounter with the Ottoman sultan. The miniature seeks to effect an impression of the sultan, but does so not by depicting him as larger than other figures, as many believe is the case for miniature paintings. The power of the sultan is not necessarily endorsed by his physical or visible grandeur. On the contrary, imperial power is projected and sustained by the sultan's semi-invisibility to his subjects. As such, the encounter with the sultan is anticipated, then deferred. It is always incomplete, configured as it has been within the imperial visual system.[117]

When the imperial intentions of the *Sûrname-i Vehbi* are taken into consideration—if one can talk about such intentionality at all—the procession series is exemplary in fulfilling the book's majestic function. As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the imperial festivals were held to broadcast the omnipotence of the sultan and the empire. *Sûrname-i Vehbi* is written and illustrated to prove that such sultanic omnipotence was, indeed, the case. The miniatures show the sultan, who is the only intended viewer of the book, the ways in which he was made (in)accessible to the public gaze. In this sense, it is plausible to suggest that the

[116] The suggestion of the insinuated viewpoint is in stark contradiction with the idea that the viewpoint deployed in the miniature painting tradition duplicates that of an omnipresent view of Allah, an argument that has been popularized by Pamuk (1998). This contention repeats that perspectival configuration is foreign to the concerns of the miniature painting; what is more, it is blasphemous to represent a scene from the point of view of a seeing subject. In contrast, I contend that many miniature paintings offer multiple and contesting viewpoints made available for the viewer. These viewpoints are in opposition to a central perspectival organization of the pictorial space, yet they might offer the individuated positions of the viewer.

[117] For more on the semi-invisibility of the Ottoman sultans, see chapter 4.

miniatures present the power of the sultan akin to the ways the festival aimed to project such power.

I earlier referred to Kuban's argument that Vehbi's verbose and allegorical imperial language is opposed to Levnî's austere visual idiom. My analysis shows that Levnî's "simplistic" approach in representing the figures of the procession is accompanied by a technique of fragmentation that complicates the viewer's experience of the series. I suggest that this montage of fragments not only turns the procession into a colossal march in motion but also disorients our viewing position as contemporary beholders. With Kuban's argument in mind, let us re-read Vehbi's account of those who awaited the sultan's arrival at the festival arena. On the day of the sultan's arrival, everyone

> flocked to the guest tents in respect of their ranks and took up residence there dressed in formal garb and arrayed in a serried and unbroken line while His Excellency the Sheikhulislam—may God grant him good health—dressed in his awesome turban and white furs withdrew into a corner of the tent assigned to him awaiting the moment when he would come forth and kiss the hem of the sultan's robe.[118]

If images encourage certain viewing positions made available to the viewer, positions with which she can identify, perhaps the vantage most readily offered by the procession miniatures is that of a modest subject of the sultan. The contemporary viewer is encouraged to experience the viewing position of the guest who is accorded full respect and who stands beside "His Excellency the *Sheikhulislam*." The viewer who contemplates the series is invited to avert her eyes in order to receive a vision of the sultan. In this capacity, the series employs and reproduces the sort of imperial vision within which the sultan, who cannot be seen directly, is constructed as the ultimate object of the look.

According to Montani, Eisenstein assumes that "a history of art can be formed as a description of paths of […. the] problematic tradition of representation whose course would therefore be marked by more or less well-chosen inventions with which the different figurative cultures have gradually articulated and

[118] The text is taken from Tulum's translation (2000).

exemplified ‘in-image’ the essential questions of representation” (206-7). My analysis demonstrates that the procession miniatures contribute to Eisenstein’s non-institutionalized alternative history of art by articulating and exemplifying the essential questions of representation “in-image.” Even though the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting remained by and large outside the canon, it can nevertheless participate in a history that is yet to be written.

Enacting the Loop

In this final section, I shall briefly introduce the film *Cenneti Beklerken* (Waiting for Heaven, 2006), written and directed by Dervis Zaim, as an attempt to conclude the critical loop I have started in this chapter. The film tells the story of Eflatun (meaning Lilac-colored and the Turkish/Arabic name given to Plato) who is a seventeenth-century master miniaturist working at the imperial court. Clandestinely, he paints portraits of his deceased wife and son in the Frank style so as to remember their faces. One day he is taken to the vizier’s house by force and ordered to paint a portrait of Danyal, an insurgent Ottoman prince who was soon to be executed. The portrait should be painted in the Frank manner in order to help the authorities to be certain on the identity of the rebel. After the an arduous journey to Anatolia where Eflatun meets the rebellious prince, the film comes to closure with his return to Istanbul only to find his apprentice obsessed with painting portraits of the prince—who was by then executed.

The film directly responds to the issues raised in this chapter not because of its theme but because of its unique style that enacts a propaedeutic model for developing a distinct cinematic language. Zaim overtly engages with such potentiality by stating that the main concern of the film was to answer the questions as to “How can one construct different cinematic expressive language” and “whether the Ottoman tradition might be beneficial in designating this language in combination with his own cinematic style” (Özyurt, 2006). In this sense, the film concludes the loop I started off in this chapter by seeking to develop a cinematographic language informed by the aesthetics of the miniature.

It does so, firstly, by incorporating miniatures—drawn by contemporary miniaturist Özcan Özcan—as active visual elements in the filmic narrative. These miniatures sometimes fade into the filmic image; at times they are digitally animated.

Secondly, and more importantly, the film employs what Zaim calls a "flexible temporality and spatiality" employed in Ottoman miniatures, which he observed most notably in the 1582 *Surname-i Humayun* (Tunali, 2006). Accordingly, the editing of the film as well as the framing of the scenes attempt to capture a flexible incorporation of different times and spaces. The mirror is employed as a figure that facilitates such crossing between the miniature and the filmic image. It opens the cinematic space to a contiguous miniature plane that is incongruous to the present of the film. Simultaneously, it is a metaphorical support though which the miniature infiltrates into perspectival configuration of the film.

The scene in which Eflatun and his apprentice ponder about the vizier's order is emblematic for the use of the mirror. Eflatun enters a room in the vizier's mansion in which the reflection of Gazel is seen in a stained mirror placed behind his master. While they discuss whether Eflatun should follow the order, the silhouette of a miniature appears in the mirror above Gazel's head. The miniature becomes fully visible as the camera slowly zooms in the mirror (Figure 18). It depicts a convoy on horseback in a brown landscape with rocky hills. Slowly the miniature fades into a film scene (Figure 19).

Figure 18 and Figure 19. The miniature in the mirror, *Waiting for Heaven*.

When the camera gradually zooms out of the scene we realize that the scene is actually seen in the (stained) mirror where we first saw the reflection of Gazel. As the camera assumes a larger angle a second mirror appears. Placed next to the first one this mirror reflects the image of the convoy advancing further in the landscape. When the convoy crosses from one mirror to the other, the camera starts panning towards right following its directionality. As the camera pans further, we see a third mirror in which the convoy moves closer to the screen (Figure 20). The camera starts

zooming in the mirror so that the faces of the people in the convoy become visible. We realize that Eflatun had already decided to take on the journey. When the convoy is about to stop the rusty spots on the mirror wane slowly. In this way, the imagined future seen in the three mirrors in the vizier's house gives way to the present of the filmic narrative.

Figure 20. The convoy in the mirrors, *Waiting for Heaven*.

In fact, the images seen in three successive mirrors are partitions of the miniature seen in the first mirror (Figure 7). Here, the director reworks the technique Levni employed in the procession series. The successive pages of the *Surname-i Vehbi* are replaced with the images seen in separate mirrors. The partitioning of the one shot—a continuous camera pan—produces an effect of inflating the spatial and temporal configuration of the plan so as to stress the strenuousness of the trip analogous to the ordering of the procession series.

In so doing, the film actively engages with the formal qualities and potentialities of the miniature in its specific medium. It offers a way of reading the film through the aesthetics of the miniature.

The subsequent chapter examines the construction of imperial visuality in detail by analyzing the portrait of Sultan Ahmed III executed by Levni. This is an exceptional miniature in sultanic portraiture since its ornamentation, taken to the level of *horror vacui*, nearly overwhelms the main subject—the figure of the sultan. To delineate what this portrait does to its viewer, I first assert that the ornamental, in its various associations with the arts of Islam, is a site of meaning, a constructive supplement, or a *parergon* that constructs a resolutely flat and opaque pictorial

space. Additionally, the ornamentation provides the miniature with an “auratic” shield, a notion advanced by Walter Benjamin, distancing the viewer from the image seen and simultaneously screening her gaze from access to the sultan’s inner qualities, a characteristic that has been considered to be among the finest traits of a “successful” portrait. Departing from these notions, I argue that in the capacity of dispersing the viewer’s gaze the miniature portrait purports the irreconcilable invisibility of the sultan—materialized in the architectural structure of the Topkapi Palace. In this sense, the miniature portrait reinforces the sultan’s power to not be seen, or to be seen only as a silhouette that cannot be imbued with individuality.

CHAPTER 4: Portrait of a Sultan: Ornamentation at Work

In 1480, the Venetian painter Gentile Bellini painted a portrait of Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1444-1446 / 1451–1481), whom the canvas' inscription identifies as the "Conqueror of the World" (*Victor Orbis*). Facing the viewer in a three-quarter facial view, Mehmed is framed by a Venetian-style arch and has been placed behind a parapet draped with a jeweled textile. Commissioned by the sultan himself, this painting is one of the most famous portraits of the Ottoman sultans painted by a European artist. [119]

Besides commissioning Italian artists to execute royal portraits in "foreign" media such as bronze medals and oil paintings, Sultan Mehmed II attempted to imbue the conventions of small-scale *Timurid* miniature painting on paper with a touch of realism inspired by Italian exemplars (Necipoğlu, 2000: 28). Around the time Bellini was working on his canvas, the Ottoman painter Şiblizâde Ahmed painted a miniature portrait of the Conqueror. In this miniature, "Mehmed's face, which resembles Bellini's oil portrait, is awkwardly appended to his seated body as part of a Timurid iconographic tradition" (Necipoğlu, 2000: 28). As Necipoğlu suggests, such culturally hybrid miniature portraits "seem to have been created in response to the sultan's wish to formulate a distinctively Ottoman idiom in portraiture that would stand out both Italianate and Persianate models" (29). Accordingly, Julian Raby argues that Şiblizâde's portrait "represents the ideological horizons of portraiture at Mehmed's court, away from exclusive dependence on Renaissance concepts to one that embraced Timurid and Turkic concerns" (2000: 71). These hybrid works were to be of substantial long-term significance for the development of Ottoman imperial portraits as determined, for example, by the sixteenth-century portrait series of Nakkash Osman, which brought forth a "synthetic mode of representation that no longer foregrounds foreign pictorial conventions," such as the traces of Italianate conventions of modeling and chiaroscuro introduced by painters like Bellini (Necipoğlu, 2000: 29).

The artistic tension manifested in Şiblizâde Ahmed's miniature portrait, which was later on erased by the authentic Ottoman style of Nakkash Osman,

[119] The painting is now at the London National Gallery.

resurfaces in the portrait series by Master Levnî entitled *Kebir Musavver Silsilenâme*. Although Levnî's work continued by and large to use the iconography traditionally associated with each sultan, it portrayed the sultans as "more solid, three dimensional figures, lending them a distinct fullness of figure" (Irepoğlu, 2000: 382). Moreover, Levnî introduced motifs, such as the voluminously draped curtains commonly used in the portraits created by the artists of the Vanmour School, that had never before been used in Ottoman imperial portraiture. By mixing different idioms, "Levnî set out to revive Ottoman painting, skillfully bringing innovation to figurative representation without undermining the essence of the genre, creating a style appropriate to this time of high artistic achievement and early western influence" (Irepoğlu 2000: 378).[120]

In this chapter, I focus on the tension between two different discourses on portraiture as it is manifested in Levnî's portrait of Sultan Ahmed III. This miniature depicts the sultan (accompanied by the prince) seated on a lavishly adorned throne placed in the rear left corner of the miniature plane. It diverges from the stylistic and compositional characteristics of other portraits in the *Silsilenâme* by displaying Ahmed III enthroned so as to present him as the reigning sultan of the time. While other portraits display single figures of the sultan, this portrait of Ahmed III includes the figure of the sultan-to-be, perhaps to emphasize the continuity of the Empire. Moreover, and more importantly, the miniature incorporates extensive ornamentation, which envelops the figures in a web of intricate floral and geometrical patterns; the outside of the portrait is embellished as well with golden floral patterns. This level of ornamentation in portraiture is not only singular in Levnî's oeuvre but also unique in Ottoman imperial portraiture.[121]

[120] The Flemish painter Jean-Baptiste Vanmour came to Constantinople in the entourage of the French ambassador, Marquis de Ferriol, in 1699, and worked there until his death in 1737. He had the chance to visit the *Divan* and the throne of the Topkapi Seraglio in the retinue of the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Calkoen and painted several ceremonial scenes. He left more than a hundred paintings comprising vistas of Constantinople, portraits of various state officials in their typical costumes, scenes from everyday life, and portraits of "ordinary" people. Most of these paintings are now at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

[121] The only exception is the portrait of Osman II by Levnî which has a similar composition to that of the Ahmed III miniature and incorporates similarly dense ornamentation. The portraits of Nakkash Osman and the works that followed his style also make use of this degree of ornamentation. However, in those miniatures, ornamentation never shadows the figures, as is the case for the portrait of Ahmed III.

According to Süheyl Ünver, Levnî's employment of excessive ornamentation reflects the decorative taste that has been called Ottoman Rococo (1949: 23; see also Irepoğlu, 2000: 380). Alternatively, the revival of ornamentation in portraiture "can be interpreted as an 'Islamicizing' trend in Ottoman visual culture, delineating its difference from its European counterpart" while the Empire was going through a systemic process of Westernization (Necipoğlu, 2000: 32). While keeping these two arguments in mind, I argue that ornamentation has a significant (imperial) function in this miniature in making it a portrait of a sultan.[122]

Richard Brilliant (1991) proposes that the Western genre of portraiture is fundamentally different from those of other art objects in the specificity and reality of its referent. Classical Ottoman sultanic portraiture, however, was conceptual (Necipoğlu, 2000: 34). Ottoman artists represented the sultans as "individualized types, combining mimetic physiognomic traits with generic elements dictated by iconographic convention" (34). Scholars such as Irepoğlu argue that the works in Levnî's portrait series, most notably the portrait of Ahmed III, are endowed with "lively facial expressions in order to express the individuality of each, so that the figures come closer to realistic portraiture" (Irepoğlu, 2000: 382). I shall argue that the ornamentation in the portrait in question challenges such a realistic reading of the image. The ornamentation turns what Irepoğlu deems a successful portrait in the conventional sense into a "productive failure" that allows us to reconsider the "truth" of portraiture.

To unravel the operation of ornamentation in this specific portrait, I first outline the discourse on the ornamental that promotes the binary opposition between essence and adjunct. Subsequently, I dwell on Jacques Derrida's mediation on Immanuel Kant's discussion of the notions of the *parergon* and the *ergon*. According to Derrida, the *parergon* is a constitutive supplement rather than an index of inferiority or something unnecessary tacked on to the work already complete in itself. Following Derrida, I argue that ornamentation in the portrait of Ahmed III functions as a *parergon* that comes to constitute the representational space of the miniature as that which the *ergon* would otherwise lack. However, this ornamental representational space is tainted by a peculiar instability. It reflects what Deepek

[122] Thinking of baroque as representing the architecture of space and of rococo as embodying a decorative style, Kuban calls the baroque period in Turkey "a period of Turkish rococo" (1954: 136). For a recent critique of terminology, see Peker (2002).

Ananth calls the "aesthetics of the carpet," which refutes "any hierarchy in the treatment of space as exemplified by the easy reciprocity and mobility between indoors and outdoors, background and foreground, center and margin" (1996, 157). Subsequently, I suggest that the miniature's ornamentation, taken to the level of *horror vacui*, treats the picture support as flat and opaque. However, the figure of the sultan and the throne break open the flatness in a manner akin to what might be called "reverse depth," a strategy used in modernist collage that, as elaborated by Clement Greenberg, was used to signify depth within the shallow surface of the painting.

The reverse-depth effect temporarily pushes the sultan close to the viewer and both plays upon the viewer's frustration and seduces her. The oscillation of the viewer directs me to question, through an analysis of the miniature portrait, what the "truth" of portraiture as a genre might be. The "successful" portrait allows the viewer to objectify the sitter and take hold of her/his unique personality. In these terms, the portrait of Ahmed III fails to be successful, even though it perpetuates the discourse of realism: it fails to transmit the uniqueness of the sitter to its viewers, as the ornamentation screens the viewer's eyes and gives her no access to the sultan's inner qualities. It establishes an auratic distance (as opposed to offering psychological closeness) that walls off the viewer.

In this capacity, I suggest that the miniature is successful as "a portrait of *the sultan*." It does not represent an individual—Ahmed III—but presents the sultan, conceptually, as an image. The viewer is not provided with *a* sultan, but is shown the meaning of sultan-ness. It does not "intend" to be a portrait in the conventional sense but rather seeks to be an idea or an event that affects its viewer precisely by keeping her outside, at a distance. This view concords with Gülru Necipoğlu's (2000) argument that the Ottoman sultan differs from his contemporaries by an irreconcilable invisibility that is epitomized by the architectural structure of the Topkapi Palace. In this sense, the miniature portrait reinforces the sultan's power to not be seen, or to be seen only as a silhouette that cannot be imbued with individuality.

Sultan Ahmed III Enthroned

Sitting solemnly on his imperial throne in Figure 21 is Ahmed III, mighty sultan of the famous Tulip Period (1718–1730), mentioned in the previous chapter in the discussion of the miniature series from *Surname-i Vehbî*. In that series, he was an inconspicuous figure among the janissaries, but here the sultan is revealed in all his glamour as the subject of the image. This depiction of Sultan Ahmed is the last in the portrait series of the sultans entitled *Kebir Musavver Silsilenâme* (Great Illustrated Genealogy), painted by Levnî around 1720. Even though it is entitled *Silsilenâme*, a generic name given to the illustrated manuscripts that carry the lineage of the Ottoman dynasty back to Adam, the book under consideration includes only the portraits of the Ottoman sultans.[123] Conventionally, *Silsilenâme*s consist of small portraits set in circular frames linked to one another by lines showing genealogical relationships and accompanied by brief explanations written around the roundels. In contrast, the 23 portraits collected in the book are full-page miniatures that are larger than any portrait executed beforehand. Additionally, the miniatures of the *Silsilenâme* were completed long before the book's text was written by the poet Munib in the nineteenth century, a first-time occurrence in this type of portraiture (Irepoğlu, 1999: 78; 2000: 380). In this capacity, *Silsilenâme* appears more like a portrait album than a typical genealogy.

Apart from the miniature portrait of Sultan Ahmed III, all figures are shown seated in three-quarter profile, turned slightly to either the left or right following the norms of *Timurid* imperial portraiture. The figures lean against large ornamental cushions (Figure 22 and 23). The seated portraits of the other sultans follow the iconography of classical royal portraiture, but the miniature in question follows a seventeenth-century novelty of portraying the reigning sultan of the time as enthroned. In its compositional difference from the book's other works and its divergence from the dominant conventions of portraiture, the Ahmed III portrait interrupts the visual continuity of the imperial portrait series. In this sense, it presents Ahmed III, who commissioned the book, as the distinguished reigning sultan of the time.

[123] For more on the notion of *Silsilenâme*, see Mahir (200b).

Figure 21. The Portrait of Sultan Ahmed III, *Kebir Musavver Silsilenâme*, Levnî, ca. 1720, Topkapi Museum, (A. 3109, f. 22v), 16.4 x 25 cm. Reproduced from Bağci, Çağman, and Renda, (2006: 262).

Unlike other miniatures, in which sultans had been depicted as sumptuously dressed, bulky figures wearing ostentatiously ornamented costumes, Ahmed III is portrayed as a delicately built man with a black beard. He is somewhat modestly dressed, his costume consisting of a silver-grey caftan with fur lining and a camel hair-colored under-robe. He wears a high turban, adorned with three fan-shaped jeweled aigrettes and a matching jeweled belt, and carries a dagger, the hilt of which we can see through his half-buttoned caftan. On the little fingers of both hands are rings that complete the stern royal outfit. We see, through the loosely opened skirts of his caftan folding out in layers of fur and clothes, the sultan's feet resting on a golden box with carved ornamentation on its corners.

Figure 22. Sultan Selim I (Grim), *Kebir Musavver Silsilenâme*, f. 9b.

Figure 23. Sultan Süleyman I (Magnificent), *Kebir Musavver Silsilenâme*, f. 10a.

Compared to the sultan's costume, the royal throne appears more exuberant. Vivid and minutely detailed floral ornamentation covers its every side and corner. In the background, tiles in a repeating pattern make up tilted squares within squares; the lower foreground consists of relatively large floral motifs arranged horizontally over a red surface. In front of the geometrically patterned background, to the left of the imperial throne, a small figure stands upright, wearing a buttoned camel-hair caftan over a grey gown and headgear with an aigrette sloping downward. His hands are folded on his chest; he and the sultan face in opposite directions. This figure is one of Ahmed's sons for whom the circumcision festivities discussed in the previous chapter were organized.

This is what the image shows, at first glance. But there is more to see: more than the sitter and his throne and the figure of the standing prince, and more than I can describe. The image is full of ornamental details filling every corner of the picture plane. Yet when it comes to talking about the ornamental figurations, words do not come easily. If description is a narrative form, one has difficulty even devising a coherent description of the ornamentation in the image that would allow the reader to visualize the motifs and patterns without seeing them.[124]

How would one describe the motifs that horizontally cut through the lower half of the miniature, patterns that seem to be linear repetitions of each other? One can refer to their distinctive colors—orange, light purple, light brown, dark blue—and curving, interlacing, knit-together lines. Or we can relate their forms to familiar objects so that the reader would imagine "something like" these motifs. We can say they resemble flowers—perhaps carnations—and different sorts of leaves, but this is not quite accurate.

There seems to be a gap between what we see and what we say about the ornamentation in this miniature. If my act of describing the miniature could be taken as an instance of *ekphrasis*, then my attempt to verbalize the visual falls short. This is a moment of what W.J.T. Mitchell calls "ekphrastic fear": "the moment of resistance or counterdesire that occurs when we sense that the difference between the verbal and visual representation might collapse and the figurative, imaginary desire of

[124] For a discussion of description as narrative, see Bal (1991), especially Chapter 6.

ekphrasis might be realized literally and actually" (1994: 154).[125] One way out of such a collapse is "ekphrastic indifference," in which the impossibility of *ekphrasis* is acknowledged in a way similar to the sentiment expressed in the sentence with which Mitchell opens his chapter: "I sure wish you [….] could see these pictures" (151). Alternatively, the resistance offered by the ornamentation could be taken seriously, with the hope of "giving voice to a mute art object" (155).

My aim, however, is not to overcome the estrangement of the image/text division, as Mitchell attempts to do. Instead, I will respect the resistance of the ornament and take its thwarting of description as a theoretical starting-point to understand what ornamentation does and what it means in this miniature. I do so in order to discuss the mode of looking that it evokes and imposes on its viewer. In the first part of my analysis, I will bring forth one of the most critical yet overused and abused terms in visual analysis, *parergon*, which has strong conceptual links with ornamentation. In the portrait of the sultan, as my analysis will demonstrate, ornamentation—long considered an addition to the work proper—functions, on the contrary, as a constructive supplement designating pictorial space.

Parergon: Ornamented Surfaces

> *Ornament*:
> 1. a. An accessory or adjunct, primarily functional, but often also fancy or decorative; (in pl.) equipment, trappings, furniture, attire.
> 2. a. Something used to adorn, beautify, or embellish, or that naturally does this; a decoration, embellishment.
> b. fig. A quality, characteristic, or circumstance conferring beauty, grace, honour, etc.

[125] In the chapter titled "Ekphrasis and the Other" in *Picture Theory* (1994), Mitchell argues that there are three instances of ekphrasis: indifference, hope, and fear, which he challenges from a semiotic point of view. He argues that ekphrasis is "stationed between two 'othernesses,' and two forms of (apparently) impossible translation and exchange: (1) the conversion of the visual representation into a verbal representation, either by description or ventriloquism; (2) the reconversion of the verbal representation back into the visual object in the reception of the reader. The 'working through' of ekphrasis and the other, then, is more like a triangular relationship than a binary one; its social structure cannot be grasped fully as a phenomenological encounter of subject and object, but must be pictured as a *menage a trois* in which the relations of self and other, text and image, are triply inscribed. If ekphrasis typically expresses a desire for a visual object (whether to possess or praise), it is also typically an offering of this expression as a gift to the reader" (164).

The entry for ornament in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, cited above, emphasizes two aspects of the term: it is an adjunct to something, and it beautifies the object to which it is added. Etymologically, the term comes from the Latin word *ornatus*, meaning dress, equipment, or embellishment, which stems from the verb *ornare*, meaning to provide with necessaries, to equip, to adorn, or to decorate. Therefore, Jenny Anger suggests, *ornare* can be understood as "providing either essential or inessential goods, for example, weapons to an army, which constitute *as army*, or flowers to one's hair" (2004: 16). Even though Anger raises the question of the necessity and essentiality of the act of ornamentation, in both instances ornament indicates an addition: it is spatially articulated to a material essence and temporally comes after that essence as a secondary act. This secondary nature of the ornamental constructs a hierarchical relation between ornament as form and object ornamented as matter, which leads to further ontological oppositions between what is external and internal, marginal and essential to the artwork.

In *Problems of Style* (1893), Alois Riegl gives a detailed survey of the historical development of ornamental styles and defines ornament as "a pattern on a surface."[126] The background squares, horizontal floral motifs, intertwined bouquets, and floating curves of leaves over the throne in the portrait should thus be called ornaments. However, the ornamental motifs *within* paintings appear to be different from those found on architectural surfaces or objects such as pots or plates. The problem of the spatial and temporal attachment of the ornament mentioned above seems to disappear when it comes to the ornamental within paintings. The ornamental motifs do not cover up a given surface with a separate materiality, as would be the case with wallpaper on a wall. Instead, the ornaments occupy the same material surface as the rest of the painting does—canvas or, in the case of miniature painting, paper. Similarly, the temporal secondariness of their rendering cannot easily be suggested. In the portrait of Ahmed III, for example, we may assume that the ornamental patterns had been applied after the figures were arranged as a

[126] In *Problems of Style*, Riegl discusses the progression of ornamentation from the Egyptian lotus ornament through the Greek *palmette* and the Roman acanthus tendril to the more recent Oriental arabesque with a thread. Although Riegl's definition of ornament is quite simple, his approach is problematic, since he assumes an uninterrupted continuity in the historical development of ornament, beginning with the Egyptians and ancient Greeks. Interestingly, Markus Brüderlin, in his introduction to the exhibition catalogue *Ornament and Abstraction*, continues Riegl's linear developmental history of the ornamental and asks whether it can "now be traced still further [….] from Runge via Post-Impressionism and Art Nouveau to modernist linear abstraction" (2001: 23).

composition and were drawn, perhaps by one of Levnî's apprentices, who carelessly forgot to fill in the empty space between the sultan's left arm and his caftan.[127]

With respect to painting, I propose that the ornamental brings about a problem on the semantic level. Ornamentation is not what makes the image an image—and more specifically, a portrait. Had the background of the image or the surface of the throne been left empty, the miniature would still have been a "meaningful" portrait of Ahmed III. In this sense, it can be argued that ornament within the miniature adds nothing to the image and could be removed without destroying the meaning and the function of the image as a portrait. As pure forms of line and color, which resist the cognitive act of description—and even interpretation—these ornaments can be considered mere decorations "in which the visual pleasure of form significantly outweighs the communicative value of content" (Trilling, 2003: 23). In such an understanding, the ornamentation within the miniature functions at most as a lure that optically attracts the viewer. Yet it directs her to the essence of the image—the figure of the sultan.[128]

Such an understanding of the meaning of ornament concurs with Oleg Grabar's discussion of the function of Islamic ornament in *The Mediation of Ornament* (1992). According to Grabar, the main purpose of ornamentation, and Islamic ornamentation in particular, is to beautify the object and enhance its effect. He argues that although ornament is non-art, it is an essential component of art; it asserts itself as an intermediate order between viewers and works of art as a carrier of beauty that transmits visual pleasure. In this sense, an artwork could physically exist without having ornamentation, but it would not be an object of beauty and thus would be uncommunicative in a fundamental sense.[129]

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[127] Texts that study the function and meaning of ornamentation within painting in depth are scarce. Riegl focuses on ornamentation in pottery, architecture, and textiles. So does Ernst Gombrich in his book *Sense of Order* (1979), although he expands the discussion to include tattooing. In *The Mediation of Ornament* (1992), Oleg Grabar discusses ornamentation in Islamic art, yet he only briefly mentions miniature painting. Similarly, James Trilling's *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (2003) largely overlooks the functioning of the ornamental within painting. Works on the ornament in modern painting include Jenny Anger's *Paul Klee and the Decorative in Modern Art* (2004), which regards abstract painting as decorative and concentrates on paintings by Klee, Matisse, and Kandisky.

[128] In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer argues that the essence of all decorative art is double: "The nature of decoration consists in performing [a] two-sided mediation; namely to draw the attention of the viewer to itself, satisfy his taste, and then to redirect it away from itself to the greater whole of the context of life which it accompanies" (quoted in Anger, 2004: 9).

[129] Grabar's discussions, especially when he inquires into the ways contemporary viewers make sense of the ornamentation, are innovative in comparison to previous works on Islamic ornament, which

I would like to distance myself from such a conceptualization of ornament as a form or order, in which its function is merely to create a sense of beauty and bring about visual pleasure. This approach would, in its description of the viewer's encounter with the image, evoke binary oppositions such as essential/adjunct, form/content, interior/exterior, figuration/abstraction, representation/anti-representation, and intelligible/sensible. I will therefore introduce the concept of *parergon* so as to dismantle conceptual oppositions that have been used to describe what a "real artwork" is.

Parergon (Greek *para*: against, beyond; and *ergon*: work), as Victor Stoichita explains, is a concept that was adopted by writers of seventeenth-century art theory; in ancient rhetoric, the term denoted "the embellishments added to a discourse" and "according to Pliny, embellishments added to a painting" (1997: 23). Most famously, Immanuel Kant introduces the discussion of the term in his third critique, in which he investigates whether the faculty of judgment provides itself with an *a priori* principle. He begins the discussion of aesthetic judgment (or judgment of taste) with an account of beauty and the judgment of the beautiful manifesting itself in four unique moments (or its features), which also defines the proper object of the judgment on which it is based. Jacques Derrida's critique of Kant's third critique in *The Truth in Painting* (1987) makes the notion of *parergon* more relevant to critical analyses of artworks. It questions "what *intrinsically* concerns the value 'beauty' and what remains external to your immanent sense of beauty," a mode of inquiry which in turn organizes "all philosophical discourses in art, the meaning of art and meaning as such" (Derrida 1987: 45).

Derrida begins the discussion of *parergon* by quoting the famous fourteenth paragraph of the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), in which the structure of "the proper object of the pure judgment of taste" is delineated in relation to *parergonality*:

> Even what is called *ornamentation* [*Zierathen*: decoration, adornment, embellishment] (*Parerga*), i.e., what is only an adjunct and not an intrinsic constituent in the complete representation of the object [.…] in augmenting

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mainly concentrate on religious, social, and even racial factors. However, his analyses do not go beyond a demonstration of the pleasure principle and the experience of beauty as ornament's *raisons d'être*, which he fails to theorize in depth. For a critique of religious and racial explanations of Islamic ornamentation, including works by Alois Riegl, Louis Masignon, Titus Burckhardt, and Ernst Kuhnel, see Necipoğlu (1995), especially Chapters 4 and 5.

> the delight of taste does so only by means of its form. Thus it is with the frames [….] of pictures or the drapery on statues, or the colonnades of palaces. But if the ornamentation does not itself enter into the composition of the beautiful form—if it is introduced [….] like a gold frame [….] merely to win approval for the picture by means of its charm—it is then called finery [*parure*] (*Schmuck*) and takes away from the genuine beauty. (quoted in Derrida, 1987: 53)

Kant suggests that the ornament is an addition to the artwork that can or must enter into the composition of the whole only formally so as to augment the viewer's taste. If it fails to enter the work as an attachment, the ornament impairs the beauty of the object and falls into the world of simple objects, as in the case of the golden frame. Therefore, in Kant's formulation, the ornament as *parergon* is always in oscillation; it plays in a liminal space, where it can "either merge for the viewer with the object itself, making it greater than it would be alone," or it can "rapture the object, depleting it of its beauty" (Anger, 2004: 8). Yet, in either case, *parergon* is a secondary object, an excess or parenthesis—in short, everything the proper object or the work (the *ergon*) must *not* be.

This leads Derrida to define the term as what "comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside" (1987: 54). It is neither simply outside nor simply inside the *ergon*. Because of this in-between-ness, *parergon* comes to play against the limit of the proper artwork and intervenes in its inside "only to the extent that the inside is lacking" (56). By means of this lack, Derrida introduces the relationship of *parergon* to the *ergon*:

> What constitutes them as *parerga* is not simply their exteriority as a surplus, it is the internal structural link which rivets them to the lack in the interior of the *ergon*. And this lack would be constitutive of the very unity of the *ergon*. Without this lack, the *ergon* would have no need *of* a *parergon*. The *ergon*'s lack is the lack of a *parergon*, of the garment or the column which nevertheless remains exterior to it. (Derrida 1987: 59–60)

Here, ornament as *parergon* is neither a sign of inferiority, nor something unnecessary tacked on to a work that is already complete in itself. It is rather a supplement added to the work to cover up an internal lack that actually constitutes the work as *ergon*. Derrida concentrates on only one of the cases given by Kant as examples of *parergon*, the frame, leaving aside other possible *parergonalities*.[130] Inspired by Derrida's analysis, I will turn to the ornamentation within the miniature painting as an instance of *parergon*.

Articulating the ornamental patterns as *parergon* in the portrait of the sultan brings back the problem of the inside and outside of the painting, yet does so in a quite different manner than Derrida argued for the frame. Physically, the ornamental surfaces are firmly situated within the picture plane. However, they seem to supplement the major topic of the miniature—that is, the portrait of the sultan—even though they cover most of the image's surface. There is nothing but ornamentation around the sultan and the prince, as if they were situated in an infinite surface made up patterns and motifs. If a *parergon* can be added only by virtue of an internal lack in the system to which it is attached, what is lacking in this portrait so that the floating patterns should come to supplement it?

I contend that ornamentation comes to construct the pictorial space that the miniature lacks and, in this capacity, it not only spatially designates the image but also constitutes the work.[131] The hypothetical infinite surface in which the sultan is firmly situated is not only cut out by the frame on four sides but is also interrupted within by means of the ornamentation's ordering. We recognize the geometrical patterns representing the wall tiles and floral motifs in the lower part as the carpet, whereas the patterns above the throne resemble embroidered textiles. In semiotic terms, then, these elements function simultaneously as iconic and indexical signs: they stand for the signified on the basis of a presumed similarity (tile, knitted carpet, embroidered textile), but they also refer to them on the basis of a referentiality that constructs them as the wall, the floor, and the throne, respectively.

In this sense, the signification process triggered by such extensive

[130] See Chapter 5 and 6 on the function of the frame in miniature painting.

[131] Zeynep Sayin notes that *ornare* also means to arrange and give order; the image with ornamental character orders while it embellishes. Therefore, she argues, even though the ornamental image is not the carrier of meaning per se, it transforms the work into a self-enclosed and organic structure of meaning (200: 80-81).

ornamentation is twofold: first, they purport to provide an "iconic way of reading" (Bal and Bryson, 1991: 190). We assume that the ornamental patterns stand for their object on the basis of a hypothetical similarity between them. In such a reading, the horizontal floral motifs are not mere formal embellishments, but are taken to refer to a carpet pattern. An iconic mode of reading, in this case, promotes a resemblance between the ornamentation and the presumed carpet motif. The geometrical patterns in the background of the miniature, evoking the Islamic wall-tile patterns for which the Topkapi Museum is famous, can also be read in this way. Second, because the ornamentation within the miniature can invoke carpet motifs and wall tiles, it also works as indexical sign referring to architectonic elements, i.e., the wall and the floor. That is to say, by invoking the iconic reading of a tile pattern or carpet motif, the ornamentation indexically constructs the wall and the floor, respectively. By means of this interpretation of the ornamental forms, the initial non-space—infinite surface—is transformed into a representational place, perhaps a room in the Ottoman palace. This reading concords with Robert Nelson's suggestion that "[o]rnament [is] not a device for soaking up meaningless space but an artifice for claiming space as meaningful" (Nelson, 1993: 5 quoted in Negrin, 2006: 221).

In the beginning of this chapter, I questioned whether the removal of the ornamentation in the portrait of Ahmed III would affect the efficacy of the image as a portrait. As it happens, an artist from the so-called *Refail* (or Rafael) School painted such a portrait as if to further such an inquiry (Figure 24). This image is taken from a painting of genealogical tree (an introduction from Europe) that depicts all sultans within oval medallions (Irepoğlu, 2000: 396). Irepoğlu suggests that the portraits of the genealogical tree painting are modeled on those in Levnî's series. She adds that the portraits are so faithful to Levnî's series that we must conclude that the artist had the opportunity to examine it (2000: 45). [132]

[132] Refail is an Armenian painter who served as a court painter to Mustafa III and Abdulhamid I. He was trained in Italy and introduced new forms such as gouache and oil painting. His approach in most of his portraits in oil on canvas display a Western approach to portrayal of figures and painting technique (Irepoğlu, 2000: 388-391). One of these paintings is in the Topkapi Palace (17/30), one in the Celsing Collection, and a third is in the Gripsholm Castle. All three are virtually identical, with only minor discrepancies in the background landscape.

Figure 24. Detail, Sultan Ahmed III, Genealogical Tree, artists unknown, eighteenth century, oil on canvas, Gripsholm Castle (Grh 227), Sweden. Reproduced from Irepoğlu (1999: 108).

In the following section I focus on the discrepancies between the two images so as to discuss how the tension between the two inherently different representational spaces allows us to understand the operation of the ornament in Levnî's portrait.

Of Other Spaces

The portrait from the *Genealogical Tree* maintains the compositional scheme of Levnî's miniature by depicting the sultan seated in a diagonally placed throne on the left hand side of the picture plane. The prince is placed on his right, more or less where Levnî positioned him. His outfit and sitting position follows those of the Levnî miniature. The prince stands in the same position as in Levnî's work, although his outfit is slightly different. The overarching difference between the two images—besides the painting technique and medium—is ornamentation. The genealogical portrait lacks the overall ornamentation employed in Levnî's miniature. The background is painted a plain light brown; the patterns on the carpet are barely visible. The backside and corner of the throne are moderately embellished in blue and gold.

That the painting does not employ extensive ornamentation is perhaps an

appeal to European taste in portraiture—and because the sultans' names are written in Latin script in small cartouches above the portraits, it is plausible to argue that the painting was commissioned by a European patron. In this image nothing distracts the viewer's attention away from the two figures. The representational space is not constructed through an ordering of the ornamental patterns but rather by means of foreshortening the ground and putting the throne in perspective. The portrait brings forth a "closed interior space." It has depth and the figures are firmly positioned within this interior. [133]

In the Levnî miniature, however, the line demarcating the geometrical ornamentation from the lower floral patterning, obscured as it is by the sultan's throne, can barely be seen at the extreme right of the miniature. To the left it is hidden behind the prince's costume. This short demarcation line gives us a vague hint where the wall ends and the floor starts. Even if the rest of the line were visible throughout the image, it would only help the viewer differentiate between two surfaces, a distinction already established by the use of contrasting patterns. In such a simple way, the ornamentation imbues the miniature with a sense of space; the ornamental patterns are "constructive supplements" rather than embellishments to the complete representation of the object that, as Kant would have it, are meant to augment the delight of taste.

Nevertheless, seen in isolation, the competing ornamental patterns do not represent the space as a three-dimensional entity in which the objects could plausibly become visible and voluminous. Every ornamental segment—the wall, the carpet, and the throne—occupies the same plane from the same frontal point of view. The geometrically patterned surface is seen frontally as a wall would be seen, as is the carpet. To see a carpet motif frontally, as it appears in the image, one should change viewpoint and see the floor from a bird's-eye vantage. As such, and in contrast to the genealogical portrait, the use of ornament on the spatial surface enforces two-dimensionality. Rather than a stage-like interior space where the figures could be placed, what we have here is a sort of flat texture containing two distinct and

[133] In *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1927), Erwin Panofsky appreciates the achievements of Giotto and Duccio in rendering pictorial space as a conquest over medieval representational principles. According to Panofsky, these artists' representations of closed interior space signify a "revolution in the formal assessment of the representational surface [….] This surface [….] is once again that transparent plane through which we are meant to believe that we are looking into a space, even if that space is still bounded on all sides" (1991: 55).

contrasting patterns. In this capacity, the sultan and the prince are not placed in a cube-like representational space but are instead situated on the surface of the miniature constructed with ornamentation.

The figures are located centrally in front of this two-dimensional wall/carpet surface. To the left stands the little prince on a small spot that seems to have been opened up just to include him in the miniature by means of the extended frame. It is as if his presence had not been planned in advance: he was incorporated into the image hastily, after the composition had been finalized.[134] The placement of the prince in the marginal corner of the picture plane (made at a cost, since the frame had to be expanded) can be read in two ways. First it can be seen as downplaying the status of the prince in comparison to the sultan so that the ruler's presence is not shadowed by the existence of a second figure. However, the expansion of the frame to include the prince can also be regarded as emphasizing his royal importance.[135] It seems as if it was necessary to include the prince in the miniature. In the *Genealogy* portrait, however, the prince is firmly situated in the picture plane, the two figures harmoniously co-existing in the same plane.

The ambivalent status of the prince is further emphasized by placing him in the picture plane at quite an impossible point (in terms of a realistic depiction). If the meeting line between the wall and the floor mentioned above is taken to be a straight one—which should be the case since the viewing position is frontal—it should have ended more or less at the edge of the jutted-out frame, just beneath the skirt of the prince's caftan. If we follow the expectation of a linearly ordered representational space we realize that the prince is positioned somewhere between the wall and the floor. In the portrait from the *Genealogy*, the prince is located in the foreshortened ground, firmly on the floor. I will argue that the impossible spot opened for the prince in Levnî's portrait is made possible by the ornamental surface that fuses the architectonic elements—i.e., the wall and the floor—into each other. The positioning of the prince doubtless appears impossible only if one considers the pictorial space to

[134] Irepoğlu suggests that Levnî might have appropriated the compositional scheme of a seventeenth-century portrait of Sultan Mehmed IV by *Musavver Hüseyin* (1999: 106). In this miniature the sultan is enthroned and accompanied by janissaries. Levnî replaces these figures with that of the prince, a truly innovative approach in the Ottoman royal portraiture. It doubtlessly refers to the continuity of the Empire. The inclusion of the prince occurs in another image (water colour on paper) in *Silsilenâme-i Osmâniye* (ca. 1757-1789) in the portrait of Sultan Mustafa III.

[135] I am grateful to Alena Alexandrova for emphasizing this aspect.

reflect our visual experience within the "real" field of vision as it has been represented in the *Genealogy* portrait. In the visual field perceived as conditioned by our experience, such a spot between the wall and the floor would belong to a non-existing space, a *un-topia*. The presence and possibility of the un-topic space within the miniature does more than demonstrate that the two notions of space are incompatible and that the representational space is not a capturing of optical space per se.

I propose that this *un-topic* space reflects what the art historian Deepak Ananth has called the decorative aesthetics of the carpet (1996: 157). Ananth proposes that the profusion of floral and vegetal motifs in the "Islamic" tradition of miniature painting brings about an organization of space akin to that of a carpet. The pictorial consequences of such an aesthetic can be seen in the denial of "any hierarchy in the treatment of space as exemplified by the easy reciprocity and mobility between indoors and outdoors, background and foreground, center and margin—those paradigmatic spatial components of Western painting that the Islamic miniature audaciously recasts as the discrete yet interlinked elements of an all-encompassing surface design" (157).

Such an aesthetic, which, I contend, is promulgated in the portrait of Ahmed III, does not presuppose a structural unity that would close up the work. In the portrait of the sultan, the ornamentation indeed constructs the representational space as an act of *parergon*, providing the *ergon* with what would otherwise be lacking. Yet this ornamental space is far from being a systematized, finished entity. On the contrary, it is a form of "makeable" space that can be extended in every direction, as shown by the instance of the inclusion of the prince. As Ananth proposes, such a conception of pictorial space lies in strict opposition to a linear, perspectival configuration of space, which is geometrically ordered, definite, closed, and unitary. The space of the miniature, by contrast, is marked by a peculiar instability and internal inconsistency, and is not constituted in accordance with a static point of view. Rather, as I mentioned above, it contains multiple points of view that enable the viewer to see the image from different angles, as in the cases of the wall/floor surface and the throne. If the pictorial space does not contain one central point that organizes the whole image, then such a space can be turned in different ways and played with. Left and right, up and down could be translated into each other. The

space moves in a way not unlike the way the beholder can move her eyes over the painting.

This fluidity is in congruence with Zeynep Sayin's argument that in Islamic visual arts the relations between center and periphery, figure and the ground, and inside and outside are different than those determined by the modernist ontology of the work of art. She argues that the idea of unity of the work—that is, *ergon*—as a closed achievement designed in advance is alien to Islamic aesthetics (2000: 184). The unity in Islamic work, Sayin contends, does not revolve around a center. The center in Islamic works is simultaneously nowhere and everywhere. Therefore, the attachment and detachment of parts in relation to this non-unity do not lead to a structural *ergon* constructed around a center. No doubt, such an understanding of the work of art refuses the Kantian opposition between *ergon* and *parergon*, since the work does not assert itself as a complete product. Rather, it is a site of contingency, and as such the distinctions between essence and attachment and outside and inside are undone.

As Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois argue, "the modernist ontology requires an artwork to have a beginning and an end, and holds that all apparent disorder is necessarily reabsorbed in the very fact of being bounded" (1997: 4). The portrait of the sultan, on the other hand, suggests that such unity is not the condition of *ergon* once we define it by contingency, openness, and incompleteness. Such an ontology of painting admits a constant lack that cannot be superseded because it is precisely this lack that constitutes the image—neither its borders nor its alleged unity do so.

In this sense, the portrait of the sultan seems to suggest an aesthetics associated with the arts of Islam. In contrast, the *Genealogy* portrait, which had probably been executed a few years after the *Silsilenâme* miniature, is decontaminated—"sterilized," as it were—from extensive ornamentation so as to display the sultan without any visual hindrance. In this respect, the miniature portrait promotes a different conceptualization of portraiture. It reclaims the classical function of royal portraiture in which sultans are displayed as static icons, distanced from their viewers.

Trapped on the Surface

Flatness is one of the formal characteristics of miniature painting. From the seventeenth century onwards, however, miniaturists, most prominently Ahmed Nakşi, attempted to play with the partial illusion of depth so as to partially expand the pictorial space.[136] The portrait of Ahmed III seems to refute such play by filling up, to the extent of *horror vacui*, the surface of the miniature with two-dimensional ornamentation. This preference for intricately patterned surfaces "can be interpreted as an 'Islamicizing' trend in Ottoman visual culture, delineating its difference from its European counterpart" at a time when the Empire was going through a systemic process of Westernization (Necipoğlu, 2000: 32). It is plausible that in his effort to revise the stylistic constraints of traditional Imperial portraiture, Levnî might have chosen to impart an effect of *horror vacui*. Literally meaning "fear of emptiness," this phrase refers to the act of filling the entire surface of an artwork with ornamental details, figures, shapes, lines, and anything else the artist might envision. Such claustrophobic claiming of the surface of an artwork is conventionally associated with the so-called arts of Islam.[137]

Whether or not Levnî aimed at such an Islamizing effect extensive ornamentation in the form of *horror vacui* promotes the aesthetics of the carpet. As I have already noted, Ananth suggests that the profusion of floral and vegetal motifs in the "Islamic" tradition of miniature painting reflects the decorative aesthetics of the carpet (1996, 157). The carpet, he argues, is the example of ornamentation "on a resolutely flat surface, and this is reflected in turn in the miniature painter's treatment of the picture support as something opaque, impermeable" (157). Similarly, the wall

[136] See Chapter 6 for a discussion of a miniature painting by Ahmed Nakşi.

[137] Most of the art historians working on the so-called arts of Islam, such as Richard Ettinghausen, have put forth an Orientalist understanding of the practice of extensive ornamentation by relating it to socio-cultural aspects of the "Islamic" cultures. Ettinghausen (1979) offers three explanations for the motivation of *horror vacui* in Islamic art and architecture. Firstly, he suggests a connection between crowded living conditions in Near Eastern cities and an artistic taste for density, arguing that living in close quarters increased the individual's sense of security, provided that he lived in a harmonious and well-organized setting. Since the outskirts of the cities were considered dangerous, he contends, closeness was associated with pleasantness, while emptiness bore the opposite connotations. Second, he suggests the impact of richly planted gardens on the minds of the people, proposing an indirect effect of abundant vegetation on taste and aesthetic attitudes. Third, he mentions a general tendency in the Islamic world toward exaggeration, be it in language or social behavior. For a critique of the relation between Orientalist discourse and art-historical inquiry regarding Islamic ornament, see Necipoğlu (1995), especially Chapter 4 and 5.

and carpet patterns in the portrait seek to reclaim the miniature surface as an opaque entity that is strictly two-dimensional.

Rendered in this way, the ornamentation seems to leave no space for the illusion of depth. However, the imperial throne can be seen as an aperture that pierces the miniature. Because it is diagonally placed, the throne can show the sultan in a three-quarter view and provide an effect of depth. Although the throne is drawn in recessing lines that ostensibly would enhance the three-dimensionality of the miniature's composition—especially its arm side—it is devoid of volume because of the application of the decorative surfaces. As such, the throne appears not so much as a golden attribute of a powerful sultan but rather as a cutout chair that has been pasted on the flat, ornamented pictorial space. Moreover, the combinations of floral patterns covering the three parts of the throne—its side, back, and upper parts—appear as if they have been taken from different surfaces and pasted on the throne independently of each other, without consideration of color or harmony of pattern. Although these randomly assembled pattern-surfaces visibly enrich the symbolic seat of the empire, they also cause it to look like a patchwork caricature of an imperial throne. They do so by imposing flatness on the object they decorate.

Corresponding to carpet patterns, the ornaments covering both sides of the throne are depicted frontally. They directly face the viewer, who always sees these detailed motifs from the same angle, as if the throne keeps moving within the image only to expose itself to the viewer from one side. In the portrait of the sultan, the two sides of the throne as a three-dimensional object are shown frontally, even though the throne was drawn with a certain concern for perspective, as suggested by the diagonal arm-side. That is to say, the contours of the throne imply the object's three-dimensionality by means of recessing lines, while the ornaments covering the sides, because of their frontal depiction, refute such recessive gestures. Here the viewer is faced with the resistance of the ornament and the ornamental surface to three-dimensionality and the illusion of depth.

It is in such a plane of pure lines and colors of geometrical tiles, floral patterns, and floating tendrils that we encounter the flat-as-paper face of the sultan. He is wrapped in these ornamental forms that actually push him toward the viewer, as if he were protruding out of the picture plane. The effect provided by the ubiquitous ornamentation is akin to what might be called "reverse depth," a strategy

of modernist collage technique that, as elaborated by Clement Greenberg, was used to signify depth within the painting's shallow surface.[138]

Greenberg refers to abstract expressionism and also, and more specifically, to the cubist collages by Picasso and Braque. However, there is a certain similarity that should not be overlooked between the formal concerns of cubist images and the portrait of the sultan. What makes the comparison illuminating is the reclaiming of the surface of the pictorial material and the continuous play with the illusion of depth to reintroduce flatness as a form of expression. In his essay "Collage" (1959), Greenberg discusses the ways in which Picasso and Braque dealt with the flatness of the canvas and created the illusion of depth by affixing paper or pieces of cloth, which provided an illusion of depth in reverse. He argues that in such a strategy, there is a literal building-out from the picture plane, rather than an illusionist recession beyond it, that secures "the effect of depths and volumes by bringing this or that part of the picture physically close to the eye, as in bas-relief" (Joselit, 2000:21).

In a similar manner, the flat surface of the ornamentation, which actually resembles a pasted-paper assemblage, as I mentioned in relation to the throne, brings the sultan close to the viewer's eyes. In fact, the whole miniature seems like a collage of different patterns and parts affixed on top of one another. This pseudo-layered formation—the geometrical and floral patterns / the prince / the throne / the sultan—brings the sultan within the viewer's reach. His restless right arm and the skirt of his caftan, which opens up in layered folds, strengthen this effect of protrusion. Such an illusionistic push extends the picture plane forwards. In this respect, the miniature reaches out to the viewer's side to violate the distance between the two. Momentarily, the figure of the sultan acts upon the viewer and attacks her eyes—only to regress back to the flatness of the throne, to which it is symbiotically attached.

This closeness of the sultan resonates with Ireopoğlu's arguments about the innovative approach employed in Levnî's portraits:

[138] Comparing Braque's or Picasso's cubist collages with an eighteenth-century Ottoman miniature might sound absurd, yet I find the comparison plausible since it helps us to problematize notions of flatness and depth through their struggles with the picture plane. Greenberg himself also made comparable connections between Byzantine and Modern art in an article entitled "Byzantine Parallels" (1961). Laura U. Marks (2007) argues that the two major elements of Western modernism, the haptic image and the abstract line, arrived in the West in considerable part through the influence of Islamic art. For a similar cross-cultural examination of ornamentation and abstraction, see Bruderlin (2001).

> The relaxed way in which the artist has tackled his subjects [….] clearly demarcates Levnî from previous Ottoman royal portrait painters. This is the first time that the concept of "exalted ruler," one of the primary qualities of the sultans whose superiority of status was unquestionable, had been viewed at closer quarters, giving the impression that the distance between subject and sovereign was not so insuperable after all. (2000: 382)

Yet, as I will argue later, the illusion of closeness of the sultan operates in such a way that ultimately secures his incommensurable distance from the viewer. This process, again, is achieved by the extensive ornamental patterns covering the sultan, which ensnare him within them as if he were caught in a spider's web. In contrast to the portrait from the *Genealogy*, in which the sultan is placed firmly *inside* the picture plane, here he is trapped on the surface of the miniature portrait. This entrapment of the sultan could be seen as a failure if the function of a "successful" portrait is taken to be the display of the inner world of the sitter to its viewers. The miniature offers a contrary view, in which the portrayed is impersonalized so as to maintain the idea of the "exalted ruler." The clash between these two discourses about portraiture as it has been manifested in Ottoman visual culture is addressed in Orhan Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red*.

The Truth of the Portrait

Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red* (1999) focuses on the tension between "Eastern" and "Western" visual regimes under the guise of a tale of love and murder that unfolds over nine days in sixteenth-century Ottoman Constantinople. The clash between traditional miniature painting and Renaissance easel painting (the characters refer to it as Frankish painting, using the Ottoman term for the West) materializes when the sultan orders a book to be illustrated in the Frankish style, which would then be given to the Venetian Doge to arouse awe and the desire for friendship. This book would include the sultan's portrait as well as other images: Satan, a tree, a dog, and a horse. While the implications of perspectival drawing dominate discussion among the miniaturists, the main knot of the novel concerns the genre of portraiture.[139]

[139] For a comprehensive visual analysis of *My Name is Red*, see two articles by Çiçekoğlu (2003a; 2003b).

The idea of the gift-book comes by way of *Enishte* (Uncle), an ambassador of the sultan who had stood in front of thousands of portraits in *palazzi*, churches, and the houses of prosperous men in Venice. Each portrait he had seen, he contends, "was different from the next"; they all "were distinctive, unique human faces," announcing the portrayed subject's "existence, nay, their individuality and distinction" (130). In Venetian paintings, eyes are not holes in a face but are "just like our own eyes, which reflect light like a mirror and absorb it like a well"; lips are not "a crack in the middle of faces flat as a paper" but "fully express [....] our joys, sorrows, and spirits with their slightest contraction and relaxation"; noses are not "a kind of wall that divides our faces, but rather, living and curious instruments with a form unique to each of us," observes Enishte in a mixture of praise and complaint (137).

The idea of capturing the sitter's unique individuality as the Frankish painters do becomes an obsession for Olive, the most talented miniaturist under the tutelage of Master Nakkash Osman. He passionately tries to make a convincing self-portrait that would show every mark on his face. It would depict "all of the wrinkles, shadows, moles and boils, every detail," from his whiskers to the weave of his clothes, and would show "all their colors in all their shades [….] down to the minutest details as much as the skills of Frankish painters would allow" (485). Even though he manages to put his portrait in the center of the last painting of the book, in the place where the sultan should have been, he confesses that all his attempts, ultimately lacking a good resemblance, were monuments to his failures. He can never depict his face as he sees it in the mirror, and therefore fails to assert his unique personality and his painterly style that would set him apart both as a distinguished individual and a successful artist.

Within the story of *My Name is Red*, the institutional resistance of the court atelier to realist representation is voiced by different characters as blasphemy, a renunciation of the vision of Allah which the miniaturist is supposed to pursue.[140] The Venetian masters "depict what the eye sees just as the eye sees it" (206), whereas the humble miniaturist, in painting what he looks at, attempts to depict what Allah envisions and desires. Implicitly and explicitly criticizing observational

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[140] For a detailed discussion on the ban of figurative representation in Islam and the ways in which it was imposed and was broken in different periods, see Ipşiroğlu (2005).

realism in painting, the characters frequently invoke the Islamic canon of miniature paintings painted by masters, such as Bihzad, who had been able to represent the world conceptually. Throughout the book the tension between the visual regimes remains unresolved. Yet the inevitability of change over stasis of tradition is implied by Enishte, who prophetically says "your stars, your ghostlike cypresses, your red-tinted pictures of love and death, yours and all the rest, all of it will vanish" (209). "One day everyone will paint as they do": "when painting is mentioned, the world will think of their work!" since there is an "undeniable allure to the paintings they make" (206). He hints at people's irresistible desire to have themselves portrayed realistically; one eventually comes to realize that "you too would want to see yourself this way, you'd want to believe that you are different from all others, a unique, special, particular human being": "the only way to have one's face immortalized is through the Frankish style" (206).

In the end, the fictional book within Pamuk's novel is never completed and presented to the sultan. In reality, however, many Ottoman sultans had their portraits done by "*Frenk*" artists since the reign of Mehmet II, which could be called the initial formative period of Ottoman miniature painting. In fact, it is difficult to assert that such a divisive institutional clash between visual regimes ever took place in the courtly ateliers. Almost a century later, Murat III (r.1574–1595), the sultan of the period in which Pamuk's novel is set, also had the chance to see his Frankish-style portrait, which was attributed to Paolo Veronese. These portraits were acquired just before the *Şemailname* of Nakkash Osman, which later become the canon in imperial portraiture, was finished. In the prologue of the book, it is stated that the portraits of the earlier sultans from the Veronese series—to which the miniaturist had no visual access—served as inspiration for the miniature portraits made by Nakkash Osman. However, Osman did not "copy" the artistry and style of the "Veronese" series. Rather, he used them as lifelike models to sketch out the physiognomy of the sultans for his portrait series.

Surprisingly, Verenose relied on another series, one made by Paolo Giovio that was heavily depended on an earlier Ottoman model. The Ottoman series that inspired Giovio was produced by an artist who stood outside the mainstream and incorporated European influences into his idiosyncratic style (Raby, 2000: 136). This complicated interaction between Eastern and Western visual cultures shows the difficulty of pinning down an authentic cultural separation between the two. Even

though this particular case is exceptional, such an example might suggest that the clash between the two visual regimes were smoother than Pamuk suggested in *My Name is Red*, at least for the formative periods of Ottoman miniature painting.

Like many of his predecessors, the sultan Ahmed III had probably seen the portrait on canvas of him that was painted by the European painter Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who made several portraits of the sultan while in Constantinople. A clash between "Eastern" and "Western" visual regimes of the sort suggested by *My Name is Red*, if it in fact existed, should clearly be seen in works of Vanmour and Levnî, who slightly revised the rules of imperial portraiture set by Nakkash Osman. In 2004, the works of these two contemporaneous artists—including several portraits of Ahmed III—were brought together for the first time in an exhibition entitled *Lale Devrine İki Özgün Bakış: Levnî & Vanmour* (Two Genuine Views of the Tulip Period: Levnî & Vanmour), held in the Topkapı Palace Museum Treasury Ward in Istanbul.[141] The title of the exhibition already implied that the artists had different if not unique "perspectives," and visitors were persuaded of differences between them not only through the title but also through the organization of the exhibition.

While the paintings of Vanmour were hung on the walls, as they were intended to be displayed, the miniatures of Levnî were put on tables with vitrines so that the viewer had to lean on the tables to see them (Figure 25).

Figure 25. Snapshot from the exhibition "Lale Devrine Iki Özgün Bakıs: Levnî & Vanmour." Reproduced from http://www.yapitr.com/turkce/haber_detay.asp?NewsID=8140.

[141] The exhibition was a continuation of the exhibition "The Ambassador, the Sultan & the Artist" held at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (4 July–26 October 2003), but with Levnî's paintings added.

Despite the physical interruptions within the exhibition—the viewer constantly had to move up and down between works by Vanmour and Levnî—one could grasp thematic continuities between the works. It seems that both artists were interested in life in the seraglio and the everyday life of ordinary people in Istanbul. Furthermore, both artists mostly chose portraiture as their means of expression. However, the discourse of clash was sustained within the art-historical presentation of their works. The exhibition catalogue (which surprisingly fails to include the miniatures of Levnî) *An Eyewitness of the Tulip Era: Jean-Baptiste Vanmour* (2003) frames the paintings as documenting in a realistic style one of the most significant periods in Ottoman civilization and culture. As implied, the eyewitness, Vanmour, objectively painted what he had seen in Constantinople; this now enables us to witness a distinguished period through his eyes.

In contrast, the portraits of Levnî, most of which were in the exhibition, were considered to depict fictional characters rather than refer to real people (Ireopoğlu, 1999: 168). Yet Ireopoğlu argues that these portraits are "still" valuable since they give the contemporary viewer enough tips about how the Ottoman people of the eighteenth century used to dress; their clothes were determined by different ethnic, religious, or professional backgrounds.[142]

Such a framing of the paintings brings us back to the discussion about representation evoked in *My Name is Red*. Are the paintings of Vanmour more realistic than the miniatures of Levnî, and is this what makes them so different from each other? Are Vanmour's portraits more successful than Levnî's in terms of capturing the "truth" of their sitters? Do they reveal "unique" personalities (Figure 26 and 21)?

[142] Yet the discourse of realism is not totally discarded, especially as the miniatures of *Surname-i Vehbi*, also on display in the exhibition, were considered images that realistically documented the festival. See, for example, Esin Atil (1999).

Figure 26. Sultan Ahmed III, Jean Baptiste Vanmour, 1703, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 33.5x26.5.

Let me turn back to the portrait of the sultan once again in light of the problematic invoked by *My Name is Red* and the exhibition. Even though my aim is not to compare the sultan portraits by Vanmour and Levnî as different modes of representation, I would like to look at the Levnî portrait through the Vanmour painting to open up a discussion of the miniature's "success" as a portrait. There is hardly any need to mention differing uses of color, light, and shading, or the application of paint in the two works. Beyond such formal differences, there is something else in the miniature that resists imparting the enticement offered by the painting. Although it contains attractive ornamentation, the miniature hides itself from being seen clearly. If the portrait as a genre aspires to present the sitter in his or her absence, to make an invisible person visible to the beholder, then the miniature refrains from that aspiration. Rather, it screens the sultan.

By so doing, the miniature hinders the viewer's potential experience of a sultan's magnificence, an impression that might be imparted by Vanmour's painting. In the miniature there is too much to look at; whereas in a more grandiose representation, the sultan should be the only figure for the viewer to concentrate on. Moreover, wherever the viewer looks, she ends up on the surface of the image, unable to see through its flatness. She is seduced to "see in" yet is distracted by the ornaments covering the image, which trap her as much as they do the sultan in the image. This feeling of entrapment—more than the feeling of amazement that one

would experience when seeing the sultan through "the eyes of the eyewitness"—pulls the viewer toward the miniature.

Does such entrapment of the sultan alter the viewer's expected relation to the image, given that we are dealing with portraiture, one of painting's established genres? In the introduction to *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (1997), Joanna Woodall writes that "[t]he desire which lies at the heart of naturalistic portraiture," is to overcome separation: "to render a subject distant in time, space, spirit, eternally present" (1997: 8). It is assumed that "a 'good' likeness will perpetually unite the identities to which it refers" (8). After quoting Aristotle and Alberti on portraiture and their judgments about the nature of a successful good portrait, Woodall concludes that traditionally in Western art discourse, portraiture was based on exact resemblance and ideal likeness. In this conception, features poetically refer to the inner subjectivity of the portrayed (16–17). Similarly, Ernst van Alphen opens his chapter on the dispersal of portrait by stating that in Western culture, "the portrait is highly esteemed as a genre because, according to the standard view, in a successful portrait the viewer is confronted not only with the 'original,' 'unique' subjectivity of the portrayer but also with that of the portrayed" (2005: 21). Therefore, he argues, the traditional portrait gives authority not only to the portrayed but also to the work of the artist as mimetic representation.[143]

Leaving aside the originality of Levnî, I question whether the portrait of Ahmed III captures his "essence" as the subject of the painting in a way that the miniaturists of *My Name is Red* both desired and abstained from to avoid blasphemy. If we pursue Irepoğlu's line of argument, this portrait reflects the physical and psychological traits of Ahmed III in a way incompatible with traditional Ottoman royal portraiture—for it presents him, with his "dark and thick beard," as "handsome and elegant." This elegant representation seizes "his fine and pleasure loving personality and sophistication"(1999: 108). In her discussion, Irepoğlu relies on the eyewitness accounts of Lady Wortley Montagu and Venetian ambassador Angelo Emo, as well as the writings of Ottoman royal historians such as Rashid, to make us believe that Ahmed III really looked as Levnî depicted him. Moreover, she points out the facial similarities between Vanmour's paintings and the miniature portrait so as

[143] It is worth mentioning that both Woodall and van Alphen are critical of the "traditional" Western understanding of portraiture. Both expand their discussions to take on this canonical view by concentrating on the moments when this tradition was shattered in Western art.

to strengthen her textual references. By putting forward such visual and textual "evidence" for the lifelikeness of Levnî's portrait, Irepoğlu falls into a double discourse of realism: she first asserts the direct correspondence between images and "reality," refuting the work of representation; then, with such authority being given to the images, she rectifies the miniature's (presumed) claim for verisimilitude.

Irepoğlu's trust in Levnî's success in capturing Ahmed III's personality stems from the alleged continuity and unity between the signified and the signifier, so that the artist represents the object she perceives and the viewer of the work thus has direct access to the represented object. Even if one assumes that "it might be possible for the painter to know that his image corresponds to his original perception or intention," as Norman Bryson argues, "no such knowledge is available to the viewer": she can "only see what the painter has set down on canvas" (1983: 39). If the viewer has only the image to see, the achievement of likeness, asserting the success of the portrait, falls flat. Therefore, I contend that the uniqueness of the subject portrayed is established not by means of mimetic resemblance between the sitter and the portrait but is rather an effect of the relation between the viewer and the image.[144] What makes the portrait of the sultan *not* successful according to the standard view mentioned above is the viewer's confrontation with the image, because this confrontation challenges her expectations.

Moreover, if the "successful" portrait captures the essence of the subject represented, it manages to do so only by turning the portrayed subject into an object that the viewer can appropriate on her own terms. In such a formulation, the relation of the viewer to the image is inherently intrusive and possessive. However, in the case of Levnî's portrait of Ahmed III, the viewer's expectation of seeing through the image—seeing, that is, the essence of the portrayed subject—is first interrupted and then cancelled out. At first sight, everything seems as "normal" as one could expect from a portrait: the figure has the "recognizable" eyes, nose, and lips that would make up a realistically depicted face, even if the proportions of the body are distorted (the hands are too big compared to the feet, a mistake which is corrected in the *Genealogical* portrait). No doubt, the sultan's lips are a crack in the middle of his

[144] Closely related to the discussion of "uniqueness" in portraiture is the notion of authority. Thinking along similar lines as I do here, van Alphen states that the authority of the portrayed is not so much the object of portrayal but its effect. That is, the experience of the viewer in front of a portrait is chronologically reversed: seeing the portrait the viewer presumes that the person portrayed was important, and then that person is bestowed with authority as an individual (2005: 22).

flat-as-paper face, and his nose is a kind of wall that divides his face—we recall the miniaturist's complaint in *My Name is Red*.

However, this figure might still make the viewer follow Irepoğlu's suggestion that Ahmed III really looked as Levnî depicted him. His beard, his jeweled headgear, and his costume make us believe that we are looking at no ordinary man but a sultan. In this sense, one cannot deny the work of mimetic representation. Yet this representation does not work on the basis of reference to a real individual. The face of the figure works mimetically because the image fails to convey the discourse of realism. The failure to construct a three-dimensional space, the absence of depth, the unrealistic proportions of the prince, the impossible positioning of the throne, the anatomically incorrect body of the sultan: these qualities refute the rhetoric of realist representation in the miniature. Surrounded by such "signs of the unreal," the face appears as a site for resemblance. However, this face is impenetrable: it is like a mask that does not reveal the inside, does not give access to the soul of the sultan. There is no way for the viewer to pierce the image, to break into the face to discover the uniqueness of the sultan's personality. The viewer's gaze is suspended on the surface of the image at the level of its ornamentation, which reduces everything seen in the miniature to its flatness.

If this flattened surface, constructed and secured by the ornamentation within the miniature, absorbs the sultan (even if he tries to escape here and there), one should wonder about the "other side" of the image: what happens to the viewer's experience of the image? Can she save herself from the trap set by the ornament? My answer would be no. The viewer's act of looking at the sultan's portrait will be suspended within the "domain of looking," between distance and closeness, seduction and distraction. As I will argue in the next chapter, miniature painting asks for the physical closeness of the viewer primarily because of its size, which, in contrast to the spatial distance required by easel painting, forces the viewer to lean over the image so as to see it clearly. I also argued, in the first chapter, that such closeness is required of the viewer where pictorial details drag her into the painting. Continuing the same line of thought, I now suggest that the flatness of miniatures brings a new dimension to the viewer's relation to the image, namely that of the imposed psychological distance that severs the viewer from the miniature, hence in this case from the sultan. As a result, the latter becomes even more unreachable.

The Auratic Shield

The ornamentation in the miniature challenges the viewer's desire to see into the image so as to capture and possess the "essence" of the portrayed while the expectation of depth is left unsatisfied. The viewer's gaze is dispersed over the portrait's surface; tiny details of the miniature's ornamental surfaces ask the viewer to come near and force her to direct her eyes to particular points. Such oscillation between closeness and distance, concentration and dispersal introduces a relation between the viewer and the image, which I would like to call "auratic," following Walter Benjamin and his famous concept of aura.

As is well known, in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1937), Benjamin provides his most extensive discussion of the concept. He sets off from the first argument that aura is a "unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be" (1969a: 222). In later writings such as "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), the notion of distance becomes one of the defining components of the concept of aura, the "unique manifestation of distance" (1969b: 188). Benjamin equates aura with the distance of the viewer as a particular way of looking at the object that makes the image inapproachable. The experience of aura, writes Benjamin, "rests on the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man" (1969 b: 188). Therefore, aura is not inherent to the artwork, but rather it is experienced in relation to the artwork; it is a particular form of relation of the viewer to the artwork. This distance cannot be superseded even if the viewer is pulled into the work by means of her familiarity with the subject matter:

> The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a major quality of the cult image. True to its nature, it remains "distant, however close it may be." The closeness which one may gain from its subject matter does not impair the distance which it retains in its appearance. (1969 a: 243)

In this respect, even though the miniature may appear to be close because of its subject matter, its appearance—constituted by excessive ornamentation and unbridgeable flatness—maintains its distance. In contrast to distance, closeness

implies “not only the triumph of the subject’s frame of reference over that of the external image [….] but also his or her assimilation of the image” (Silverman, 1996: 97). In this respect, closeness is a possessive relationship. It implies getting hold of the image as an object: a process which, as I have argued, is discouraged by the portrait of the sultan.

Such warding off the viewer accords with Necipoğlu’s argument that the Ottoman sultan differs from his contemporaries by his incompatible invisibility and overemphasized power of gazing. In “Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces” (1993), Necipoğlu discusses the differences between the visual economies of Persian, Ottoman, and Mughal dynasties as manifested in the construction of imperial architecture. In a semiotic analysis of the structure of the Topkapi Seraglio as the seat of the Ottoman Empire, she argues that the Ottoman sultan was made invisible to his vassals, but he “could survey his capital and view public spectacles without himself being seen. This one-sided viewing could be exercised by sitting behind a grilled window” above the entrance arch of the first gate leading into the first court, known as the Court of Processions (304).[145]

Within the seraglio, the sultan was almost invisible as well. He could, for example, gaze inside the public council hall (*Divan-i Humayun*) from behind a grilled window opening in the tower. From this vantage point he could watch legal proceedings and banquets for ambassadors without himself being seen. Considering such examples, Necipoğlu contends that

> [T]he spectacular silhouette that the Topkapi projected to the world could only be perceived from a distance [….] The ruler’s gaze, architecturally framed by grilled windows, view-commanding private kiosks, and belvedere towers, signifying his power to see without being seen (or to be seen only as a shadowy silhouette), accentuated the unbridgeable distance between the ruler and the ruled. (305)

[145] Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu (2000) observes a direct relationship between Ottoman art and palace ideology and argues that Istanbul has to be credited for the creation of stately and royal images in art and architecture. Moreover, she discusses how ordinary citizens regarded these creations and how certain forms of art and architecture were transmitted from the capital to the provinces. For a similar discussion on the transmission of the use of windows and window glass in imperial architecture to provinces, see Bakirer (2001).

Similarly, private meetings with the sultan within the seraglio were obscured. The façade of the private reception hall, which represented the monarch's absolute authority, was covered by a large ceremonial window with gilded iron grilles. This window allowed official visitors a preview of the sultan enthroned in majesty, framed by the window like an icon (305). Therefore, it is plausible to argue that encounters with the Ottoman sultan were based on the ruler's semi-invisibility, veiled as he was by means of grilled windows or doors. The viewer could see him only as a silhouette and at some distance; he was always situated behind a screening frame that impeded the possibility of mutual gazing. The sultan was inapproachable in a way similar to the way in which the sultan's portrait imposes on the viewer. Although the portrait makes the sultan fully visible—it even pushes him close to the viewer—the viewer's gaze cannot reach him: it is always deterred and deferred.[146]

However, in the early eighteenth century the secluded image of the sultan delivered by the structure of the Topkapi seraglio is transformed into a more accessible royal image. According to Tülay Artan, during the age of Sultan Ahmed III (1703-30) "the role and image of the sultan changed as his image as a horseback leader in war faded" (quoted in Peker, 2002: 148). His authority was declared and consolidated by the erection of new waterside palaces and ceremonies attached to their use. Peker suggest that "the banks of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn had never before witnessed such magnificent and elaborate activities around the royal residence, and the transparency of the '*yali*' (waterside houses) exposed once isolated lives to full public view from the water" (2003: 148). This transformation of Ottoman court ceremonial, marked by the construction of display-oriented monumental palaces, was inspired by French models. Shore palaces set in public parks gave way by the nineteenth century to even more openly Europeanizing palaces no longer hidden behind forbidding walls, and finally to the total abandonment of the Topkapi together with the antiquated political order it represented (Necipoğlu, 1993: 306).

In this sense, in the reign of Sultan Ahmed III the invisible image of the "oriental despot" is replaced by a novel "presencing effect" in which the sultan

[146] Mutuality of looks is impossible in the miniature since the sultan has no eye contact with the viewer. He is not even shying away from the viewer. He is indifferent to any outsider's gaze; he is absorbed in himself, a state that closes the painting off before the eyes of the beholder.

purported a relatively transparent image (Marin, 1988).[147] The miniature portrait, however, refutes such unobstructed visibility of the Sultan. This discrepancy points up the miniature's attempt to reinforce the conventional image of the unapproachable Ottoman ruler. In this capacity**,** the miniature is successful as a "portrait of *the sultan*." It does not represent an individual—Ahmed III—but presents the sultan, conceptually, as an image. The viewer is not provided with *a* sultan, but with the meaning of *sultan-ness*. If one can talk about the intention of an image, then the miniature is successful: it "intends" not to be a portrait like the *Genealogy* portrait, but an idea or an event that affects its viewer precisely by keeping her outside, at a distance.[148]

In the fifth protocol of the "Protocols to the Experiments on Hashish, Opium and Mescaline," Benjamin writes that the distinguishing feature of the genuine aura is "the ornament, an ornamental periphery [*Umzirkung*] in which the thing or being lies fixed, as if confined in a sheath." If we take his definition literally, then the sultan in the portrait is indeed surrounded with such ornamental periphery; he is confined in a *sheath* that secures him from the intrusion of the viewer, just as the Topkapi Palace's grilled windows did. The ornamentation in the miniature scatters the viewer's look on the surface of the image, where there is hardly a place for her eyes to rest.

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147 The image of the Ottoman sultan can be contrasted to the spectacular image his (almost) contemporary Loius XIV of France. Necipoğlu notes that according to Peter Burke, Louis XIV, in his memoirs, contrasts the French style of monarchy with the style of nations where "the majesty of kings largely consists in not allowing themselves to be seen." In addition to the Spanish monarch, as Burke suggests, this statement may also allude to the Ottoman sultan whose rule French writers of the time had come to regard as the epitome of Oriental despotism. Many of them contrasted the sultan's awe-inspiring invisibility with the public accessibility of the French king who wanted to be loved by his subjects, a topos that links hiddenness with despotism." (1993: 306). In *Portrait of the King* (1981), Louis Marin discusses the semiotics of power in the verbal and visual representations of the absolutist monarchy of Louis XIV by relying on Ernst H. Kantorowicz's discussion of the medieval doctrine of the "king's two bodies" (1957). I will not expand on the Ottoman political discourse in the early eighteenth century, at the time when court ceremonial was being transformed—which has not yet been studied—as the discussion exceeds the limits of this study.

148 Here the difference between the functions of the miniature portrait and the portrait on canvas should be retained. The miniature was designated to be seen by one person at a time (that is by the sultan and his family). The canvas, on the contrary, exerts its power by its collective visibility. Yet, this does not mean that it had public visibility as it was, most probably, kept in the Palace treasury. In the nineteenth century, imperial portraits gained public visibility especially under the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) who has ordered to have his portraits to be hung on the walls of diverse imperial institutions. He "is said to have gone as far as minting coins with his engraved portrait" (Renda, 2000: 449).

It is in this sense that the portrait of the sultan succeeds in achieving its intention to present the idea of sultan-ness. The auratic shield does not actually reveal the sultan. It reminds the viewer that she is looking at a sultan who cannot be "seen." In this way, the portrait manages to maintain the invisibility of the sultan, as was the case in the miniature series of the sultan's procession, discussed in the first chapter. Therefore, the ornamentation takes on the imperial function of screening the sultan from his vassals' gaze in a way that is similar to the manner in which the palace's windows and doors obscured him.

In the following chapter, I focus on another notion, namely the "miniature," which like the ornamental has been traditionally associated with the feminine. Following a discussion of the symbiotic relationship between the book and miniature painting, I dwell on the ways in which size might matter in relation to painting. Through a discussion of the seventeenth-century miniature representing King Timur's battle in Mazandaran, I will argue that the "normal" size of the modern tableau-window follows the dimension and erect orientation of the human body. The miniature, on the contrary, follows the dimensions of the book in correspondence to the hand. Consequently, it follows a horizontal orientation that encourages the viewer to position herself accordingly. Moreover I propose that the Timur miniature provides us with a miniaturized representational time and space. Lastly, keeping in line my discussion of the small, I focus on an invisible detail in the miniature and assert that it functions on a different level than does the representational detail (discussed in Chapter 1). This absent detail operates as what Georges Didi-Huberman called the "symptom" which brings forth another state of painting.

CHAPTER 5: The Miniature, The Horizontal, and The Symptom

> […] once a viewer is caught, he wanders within the miniature trying to understand how it works and what is in it, so as almost to forget that he is holding a book.
> Oleg Grabar, "Toward an Aesthetic of Persian Painting," 139.

The Ottomans hid their paintings in books, displaying them on thin pages among elegant calligraphic texts. For centuries they refrained from exhibiting images but instead kept them concealed within in the intimate space of a book, where only the reader would find them. This chapter aims to bring about a fresh insight about miniature paintings by focusing on the material aspects of the medium of the book. I concentrate on the scale, dimension, and physical orientation of miniatures as conditioned by their placement in books so as to disentangle their implications for the process of reading. The repercussions of such material aspects of the tradition of miniature painting have so far been overlooked. I propose that this deficiency might be overcome by engaging with modern art theories that deal with the relationship between materiality and perception, albeit in different media from the book.

Writing about the recent fascination with sublime proportions in contemporary art (as in Vito Acconci's and Damien Hirst's works), Susan Buck-Morss acknowledges that size is "a formal characteristic that has nothing to do with the art's content" (2004: 5). However, her discussion reminds us that while monumentalization has enjoyed its critical function of challenging the viewer's customary notions regarding scale in modern art, miniaturization has hardly been considered to have such potential. Drawing on the theoretical framework provided by Gaston Bachelard (1958), Susan Stewart (2001), and Ralph Rugoff (1997), I claim for "minute objects" an equally subversive potential through my discussion of a miniature painting depicting the campaign of King Timur (Tamerlane) against Sultan Husayn, taken from the seventeenth-century book *Rawdat al-Safa*. I contrast Eastern and Western ideas about miniaturization and consider the notion of the tableau as that which has set the normative scale for painting.

The directionality of my reading of the Timur miniature, which is analogous to that of reading a book, brings about a problem concerning the orientation of the

viewing process. The mode of reading encouraged by the miniature is significantly different from the viewing trajectory promoted by the tableau and wall painting, which follows the vertical orientation of the human body. Following critiques offered by Walter Benjamin (1928), Leo Steinberg (1972), and Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois (1997) of verticality as well as their arguments concerning the horizontal image in modernism, I argue that the miniature suggests a total horizontalization of the viewing process that affects the viewer's body as much as her intellect.

Similarly, Rugoff argues that the miniature scale draws the viewer mentally and physically closer to the image (1997:14). In the Timur miniature, at the juncture of miniaturization and horizontalization, an invisible "object," a detail in the center, takes over the image. As I have argued in Chapter 1, attentiveness to details in the process of looking can bring forth unanticipated readings. Accordingly, I suggest that the invisible detail offers a narrative reading by operating as a device for what has been conceptualized as a "pregnant moment"—which opens up to a future-to-come that cannot be incorporated within the miniature. Moreover, it functions as a symptom, as Georges Didi-Huberman called it, that indicates a passage to "another state of painting."

Opening the Book

Rawdat al-Safa, written by Mirkwand (d. 1489), is a general history book divided into seven volumes, the first of which contains the history of patriarchs, prophets, and the pre-Muslim kings of Iran. The sixth volume in question, covering the period of the reigns of Timur and his successors, goes up to 1469. It is dated 1008 in the *Hijri* (Islamic, lunar) calendar, which corresponds to 1599–1600 in the Gregorian calendar. The volume consists of 412 folios of 36.5 to 22.3 cm in size and includes eleven miniatures by an unknown miniaturist.[149] In her article titled "A Copy of the Rawzat al-Safa with Turkish Miniatures" (1969), G.M. Meredith-Owens writes that even though the use of color in the copy is reminiscent of Persian techniques, "the vigorous and exuberant layout of each composition, the shortening of the forequarters of some of the horses, the frequent use of profile and full face, and the

[149] The manuscript is written in Persian with section headings in blue and gold. It contains Turkish glosses, probably inserted later, in red.

Turkic racial types which are displayed with a great skill in characterization" indicate the Turkish origin of the miniaturist (110).[150]

Banu Mahir classifies the book as an example of provincial style, which was developed under the patronage of state officials in outlying Ottoman locales such as Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, and Baghdad in the second half of the sixteenth century (2005: 66).[151]The style of the Baghdad miniatures differs from that of the imperial atelier in Istanbul. According to Milstein, the Baghdad style "combines material elements such as costume, architectural forms and plants from the repertory of Iran and Turkey, with techniques of modelling, perspective and three-dimensional space from Moghul, 'Arab' or even European paintings" that gave birth to a mode that was "less linear, less flat and brilliant in color than Persian and Turkish schools, less close to Europe than the Moghul" (1990: 71).

I have chosen the miniature depicting the campaign of King Timur against Sultan Husayn (Figure 27) because it combines the subject matter and compositional strategies used in the miniatures of the sixth volume.[152] The illustrated series consists mostly of battle scenes, yet there are also several miniatures that depict kings receiving envoys or marching troops en route to battle. The Timur miniature under consideration can be seen as an amalgamation of these three types of miniature subjects.[153]

[150] Norah M. Titley states that the miniatures of the *Rawdat al-Safa* are in a "Persianized Ottoman style" (1981: 60). Rachel Milstein identifies the miniatures, along with 31 other complete manuscripts and 21 detached leaves (1990: 2-3), as belonging to the so-called Baghdad school.

[151] The Ottomans captured Baghdad in 1534 and the city belonged to the Empire, except for short periods, until the establishment of the kingdom of Iraq by the British control in 1921. The commissioners of manuscripts were mostly the Ottoman governors of Baghdad who ordered illustrated manuscripts for their personal use or as gifts for the sultan in Istanbul. The Mawlawi order in the city also commissioned some books. Milstein (1990) stresses the significance of non-royal patronage in enabling the evolution of the Baghdad style free from the formality and stiffness of the court style.

[152] Timur (a.k.a. Timurlane or Timur the lame) is the founder of the Timurid Empire (1370–1405).

[153] Some of the miniatures in *Rawdat al-Safa*, such as "Ulugh Beg dispensing justice in *Khurasan*" (f.346), show events taking place within interiors. In such miniatures, we find elaborated architectural depiction. In the Timur miniature we also find the inclusion of the architectural setting—the fortress above—even though it is not a sophisticated representation.

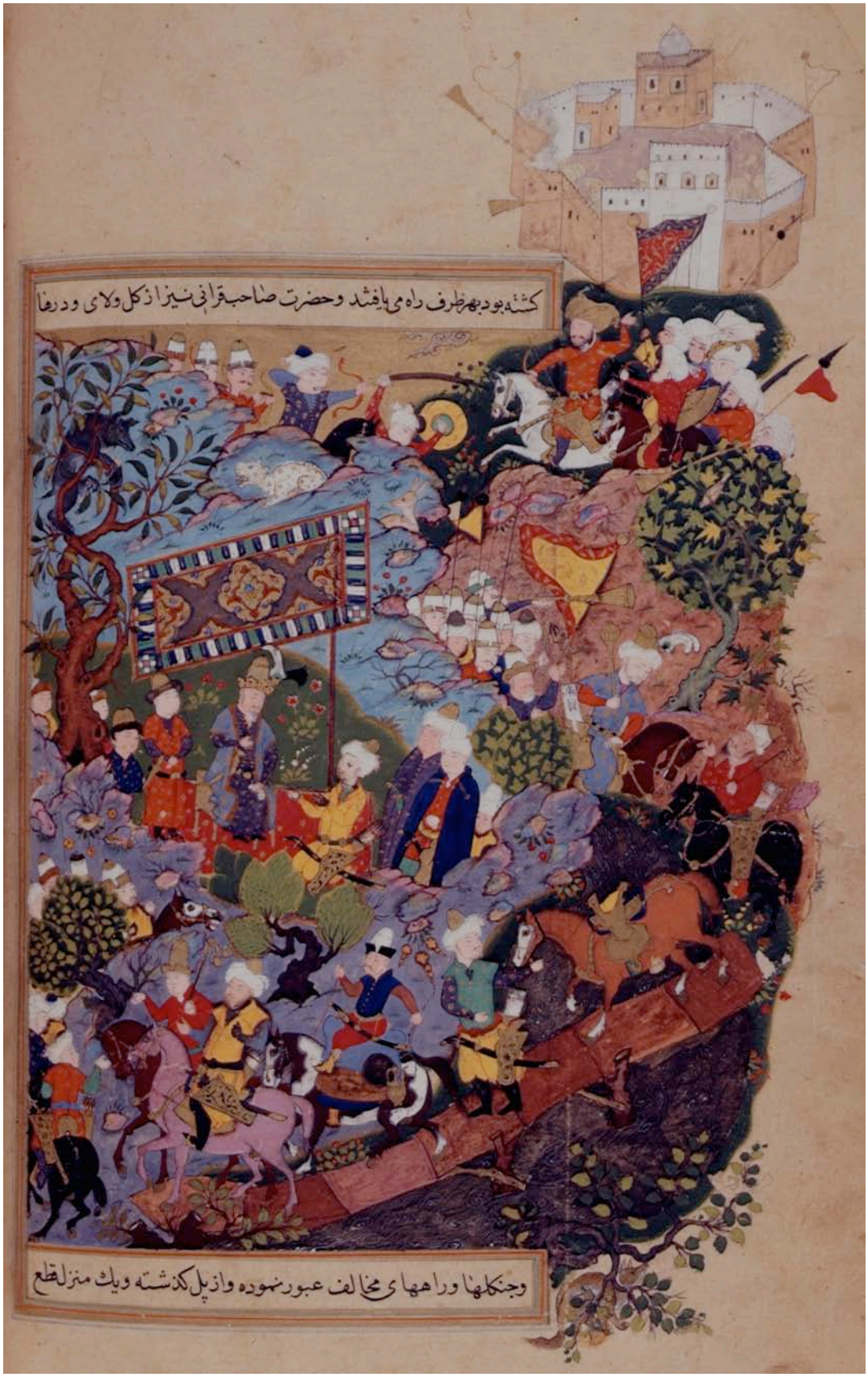

Figure 27. "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn," ***Rawdat al-Safa,*** **artist unknown, 1599-1600, British Library, (Or. 5736; f. 232b), 28 x 17.5 cm.**

In the center of the miniature, we see Timur resting in Mazandaran (a Northern province of present-day Iran); in compositional terms, the scene resembles those that show the envoy receiving miniatures.[154] Timur, who can be distinguished by his princely headgear, sits on a transportable throne that has been placed on a red carpet under an ornamented canopy. His servants and warriors accompany him in a grassy field surrounded by a rocky landscape.

Right below the spot where Timur rests his troops wind their way through the mountain defiles toward the meadow. They appear out of a cleavage between blue and pinkish rocky mountains, the compositional structure here showing itself to be quite similar to that of the miniature of Mirza Abu'l-Qasim crossing the ford of Kunduz on the Oxus with his troops (f.368). Some of the soldiers cross a deep river by the bridge, which, according to Meredith-Owens, they must have constructed themselves (1969: 116). Some have already passed the bridge, others are about to reach the river, and still others are passing the bridge either on horseback or on foot. On the upper part of the miniature, above the colorful mountains, the remainder of Timur's army battles their enemies in an attempt to conquer the fortress of Sultan Husayn, which is placed at the top right section of the page.[155] Lacking color, the castle looks unfinished in comparison to the rest of the miniature. If we look carefully, we can see trumpets sticking out of the bastions and the contours of the flags waving on two sides of the fortress. A few soldiers stand atop the walls, one of them playing the trumpet.

The miniature is framed on three sides. On the right, as if to stress the harshness of the mountains and the powerful current of the river painted with silver, the frame is broken open. The opening has allowed the artist to place the castle outside the upper frame, a gesture that has turned the whole page into a picture plane. Within the gilded lines of the image frame, there are two text-boxes, one on the upper and the other on the lower side.[156]

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[154] For example, "Timur receiving *Amir Husayn*'s envoy during his attack on *Balkh*" (f.37v) and "Timur's envoy before Bayazid I" (f.172v).

[155] The battle scene resembles miniatures such as "Battle between Timur's army and the Tartar troops of Tuqtamish Khan" (f. 97), "Battle between the armies of Abu Bakr of Tabriz and Qara Yusuf Qaraqoyunlu" (f.277), and "Battle between Timur and Tuqtamish Khan" (f.122v).

[156] The translation of the upper text reads "[...] those who had been killed, and they would ride in all directions and also the king who had ruled for fifty years would pass through countries and gates." The lower text reads "and woods and opposing paths and pass over a bridge and cross a house [...]" I am grateful to Hossein Khosrowjah, from the Program of Visual and Cultural Studies at the

Like Levnî's procession series discussed in Chapter 3, the *Rawdat al-Safa* miniature is exceedingly crowded. There are human figures (several on horseback), animals, flags, flowers, and, for the careful eye, a whirling Chinese cloud hanging above a yellowish sky. The claustrophobia of the scene has been alleviated by an uneven distribution of the figures, especially near the place where the army marches in spirals.[157] The army proceeds from the middle of the picture toward the right and curls toward the foreground, its soldiers slowly disappearing behind the mountain after they cross the bridge. The spiraling soldiers direct the viewer's eye away from the center and into the foreground, and on from there to the encampment of Timur and his company. If we follow with our eyes the branches of the tree behind Timur, we see, at the top of the miniature, the battle taking place. This curvilinear pattern of looking ultimately ends when our eyes reach the castle—"the house," as it is called in the text.

The army circles around the encampment area located in the center of the picture plane, in which Timur and his servants are singled out as the most important part of the image. Indeed, this is the most static part of the miniature; by contrast, the marching troops and the battle scene suggest continuous motion. Troops in the foreground are busy with their crossing toward the bridge; they carry flags, or play the trumpet, or talk to each other. One soldiers on the bridge pulls his horse by the bridle while three others on horseback are involved in a conversation. In the curvilinear row of soldiers we see a chain reaction. The action of one figure is transported to the next until our eyes reach the encampment area. Though the culminating confrontation has not yet taken place, the battle scene is vivid: at the top right corner, the forces of Sultan Husayn have made a sortie from their fortress. Soldiers from both sides launch arrows. One figure on horseback—his sword drawn, and holding a shield—is about to attack the enemy.

In the midst of such movement, Timur and his company are, exceptionally, at rest (Figure 28). The companions on both sides of Timur stand still so as to offer a gesture of extreme respect. The king, meanwhile, sits on his throne, holding a white handkerchief as a symbol of his sovereignty. Clad in a bright yellow robe, a figure

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University of Rochester, for the translation of the texts.

[157] In the *Surname-i Vehbi* Levnî also uses such a whirling composition of marching troops to fit crowded scenes into the picture plane. See Chapter 3.

carrying arrows and a big sword kneels down in front of Timur. His hands are stretched out toward the king as if he wishes to give something to Timur, who has raised his right arm to receive what the servant has to offer. It is a frozen moment of silence. The arrested gestures of the servant and Timur, showing the patent tension between the two—embodied by their bodies getting closer, stretching out, and the expectation that the servant will pass on what has to be given—make up the focal point of the miniature.

Figure 28. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

Around this focal point, the marching and fighting figures spin as if they were caught up in a whirlpool. Borne along by this current, whose path is emphasized by the pinkish mountain and even more so by the river that spills over and breaks out of the frame, we arrive at the still waters, so to speak. We stare and apprehend the distance between the hands of the two figures where, in fact, nothing happens; there is nothing to *see*. We see the hands of the servant and can presume, from the way his hands are positioned, that he is holding, perhaps, an empty tray.[158] Since Timur holds nothing in his right hand we can assume that the "object" has not been exchanged.[159]

We witness an exchange of multiple looks instead of a swap of goods. The two figures regard each other while the others surrounding them hold their hands on

[158] The brown line seems continuous with the pole that holds the canopy and the contours of the carpet. Yet I think, from the way it is placed in the right hand of the servant, that the line figures an object in its own right that could be identified as a tray.

[159] Throughout the rest of this chapter, when referring to this absence, I will use the term "object" without quotation marks. However, my usage does not mean that I presume that this absence is the absence of a definite object.

their bellies and look at the two from a distance. And finally we, the viewers, our hands on the miniature, move closer and closer to the thin paper in order to see what is going on, and stare at them. Is it because the image is so small that we cannot see what every figure around Timur is gazing at? Is it because this image is a "miniature" that we do not see those details we would have seen in a normal-size painting?

The Miniature and the Tableau

> *Miniature*
>
> n. Something that is a smaller or reduced version of an original, and related senses
> adj. Much smaller than the normal size; tiny; represented, designed, or occurring on a small scale.

"Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn" or "Timur in Mazandaran" as the miniature is named, is a medium-scale miniature, measuring 28 x 17.5 cm including the fortress on the top of the page.[160] Given its relatively large proportions, it may not even be properly called a miniature, strictly speaking.

Current usage of the term "miniature" stems from a historical etymological confusion. The word is derived from the classical Latin *mini t-*, past participle stem of *mini re*, which means to color or paint with vermilion; to rubricate or (in extended use) to illuminate (a manuscript) (*OED*). In medieval book production, red lead or vermilion was used to mark particular words in manuscripts and to illuminate capitals. As these images were of necessity small, the term came to denote small portraits, a usage probably reinforced by an association in folk etymology with the (ultimately classical Latin) *min-* root expressing smallness (as in *minor*).[161] According to the *OED*, the etymologically mistaken usage of "miniature," connoting a comparison in size, appears only around 1566. I propose that this etymological

[160] Art historian Metin And differentiates three different sizes of miniature paintings. The medium-sized miniatures were the most used ones and their sizes varies from 15x 10 cm to 37 x 23 cm. Those smaller than the medium size would be utilized in case the book they were illustrating was of smaller dimensions than usual size or if it contained too many illustrations—as in the case of encyclopedias—necessitating that the size of the miniatures be smaller (2002: 131).

[161] In the medieval period a manuscript miniature was referred to as historia, and portrait miniatures as "limnings"—from lumine, hence illumination—or simply "pictures in little." For more information, see Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, http://www.groveart.com.

overlap should be taken neither as a mere coincidence in the "evolution" of language nor a "slip of tongue" but rather should be contemplated in a historical context.

The notion of miniature, as we use it today, is a relative term. Without comparison to an original, nothing can be regarded as a miniature. As Susan Stewart writes, "there are no miniatures in nature; the miniature is a cultural product [….] of an eye performing certain operations, manipulating, and attending in certain ways to, the physical world" (2003: 55). Through this operation of the eye we construct the notion of scale, which according to Stewart "is established by means of a set of correspondences to the familiar" (2003: 46). The miniature arrives as a historical outsider in comparison to the objects we regard as familiar.

It is likely that this confusion runs parallel to the emergence of what can be called the institution of the "tableau" as the standard medium of painting in Europe in the sixteenth century. The tableau designated and secured the art of Painting (with a capital P) and, as I will argue later on, in achieving this, it determined the mode in which the viewer has since encountered the visual field. I use the term tableau following both Hubert Damisch's writings on the differentiation between *peinture* and the tableau and Gérard Wajcman's discussions of the birth of the tableau and of the spectator in his *Fenêtre: Chroniques du regard et de l'intime* (2004). Damish writes that *tableau*, in French, means painting, but it also refers to the *tabula*, the table, something square that is quite different from the English term "picture" or "painting." He writes:

> The French definition is straightforward: a "tableau" is, first of all, an object, a plane, a flat surface of wood or of canvas mounted on a frame, something like a *table*, but one that is placed vertically, at a level and in such a way as to serve as the base for whatever one may wish to inscribe or display on it. A metonym [….] or rather a synecdoche that is the opposite of the one used in English. Where the English puts the emphasis on the object represented (*picture*) and distinguishes clearly between the picture in the active, 'progressive' sense of the term, or *painting*, and the base on which the painting takes place (*canvas, panel, picture plane*), French is not adverse to stressing, right from the beginning, the material aspect of what it calls *tableau*, leaving it to the museums to be more specific and display, as the

> Louvre does, their works in what they call collections, not "de *la* peinture" (of painting) but "*des* peintures" (of paintings). (2001: 166)

For Damisch the difference between the two terms is not merely a question of terminology.[162]

He points out that they are synecdoches, but the choice of which part is to represent the whole constitutes a significant shift in perception; the term "tableau" denotes both the product of painting and the material base on which it is placed. The term "tableau" opens up ways of thinking about the relation between "the operation of painting with its external form, its 'exterior' and its substrate, if not its very substance" (Damisch, 2001: 166). According to Damisch, the tableau is an autonomous, strictly delimited, rigid, manageable, and transportable plane surface serving as the support or the frame (*cadre*) for all forms of figurative operations (1990: 190). He contends that such a mobile, displaceable, and hence replaceable object breaking away from architectural and contextual bonds coincides with the operation of the picture that emerged with the development of the technique of representation known as *costruzione legittima* (1991: 166).

Similarly, Gérard Wajcman dates the birth of the tableau as a modern form to the Renaissance period, and more specifically to the idea of the tableau as an open window which began to put an end to the reign of the medieval polyptique (2004: 57).[163] For Wajcman, as for Damisch, the logic of the tableau breaks with the contextual values of prior media, such as fresco painting and book illustration, by its delimitation of the painting within the space of encounter. It problematizes the limits and limitations of painting. As a dialectic moment, Damisch writes, the picture "may be seen as the negation of what had previously formed the base for the picture"

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[162] In a review of Hans Belting and Christiane Kruse's *Die Erjndung des Gemaldes: Das erste Jahrhundert der niederlandischen Malerei* (1994) Victor Stoichita and Didier Martnes write, "Belting rightly deplores the absence of any lexicological and historical study of the word and object *Gemalde* [….] This problem of terms is particularly acute, it seems, in English, where the notions designated by the German *Gemalde*, the Italian *quadro,* or the French *tableau* have no true equivalents. During the period analyzed by Belting, the Low Countries themselves possessed only a rather ambiguous vocabulary in this regard, since neither the French *ymaige de peincture* nor its Netherlandish counterpart, *schilderye*, covers completely the semantic field of the words tableau, *quadro*, Gemalde, or *Tafelbild*." (1996: 733). The authors also argue that Belting shows that the problem of style is intimately linked to the dimension of medium, and that in the final analysis it was the birth of a new support—the tableau in the modern sense of the term—that made the new style necessary.

[163] All translations from Wajcman's *Fenêtre* are mine.

(2001: 167). By breaking away from prior contextual spaces, such as the wall or the book, the tableau puts forth a subtle assertion of the independence of the art of painting and posits the painting as an object of worth in its own right. The tableau of the painting proper becomes the normative locus of display where all forms of figurative operations take place, offering a new way of making visible.

Does Size Really Matter?

The tableau suggested, I contend, the standardization of the scale of painting. Wajcman argues that the Renaissance *quadro* or the tableau-window operated not only as the mathematization of the form but also, and at the same time, as the "humanization" of its size (2004: 126). He proposes that the Euclidian geometry, which is based on the figure's unity, is the application of the human body to/with mathematics; the study of the body's proportions and the placement of the figures in perspective were evidently among the problems of Renaissance painting (127). Moreover, he states that the rectangular form of the tableau is comparable to the posture of the human body following the *l'uomo quadrato* of Vitruvius, which is reinvested in the Renaissance period, as in the case of Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1513). This is a man in a T-shape, an erect geometric man who will become the measure of everything, including the tableau itself (2004: 132). The tableau presupposes a size comparable to that of the human body, to which it is anthropomorphically related: "The form of this support [the tableau] is more immediately proportioned with our form, with the proportions of our body, its measurement" (148).

Stewart argues that the miniature "assumes an anthropocentric universe for its absolute sense of scale" (2003: 56). In this sense, in comparison to the anthropomorphic scale of the tableau, the book illumination is called "miniature" in the sense of its being something much smaller than normal, something tiny, represented, designed, or occurring on a small scale. Stewart relates the aesthetic effect of normative human scale back to Aristotle's proposition of an appropriate scale for beauty in his *Poetics*: "A minute picture cannot be beautiful [….] nor can an immense one [….] There is a proper size for bodies and pictures—a size that can be kept in view" (quoted in Stewart, 1997: 74). According to Stewart, the aesthetic size

to which Aristotle refers is the scale of the first person subject, "the scale of the single-point perspective, [based on] a human body fixed at a precise location in time and space" (1997: 74).

No doubt, the Aristotelian aesthetic scale that had been reinvested in the Renaissance tableau was challenged and subverted in the centuries that followed. James Meyer argues that scale was one of the main concerns of the Abstract Expressionist movement in the 1940s and 1950s, whose artists sought to change the experience of the viewer in front of the tableau (2004). However, such practices were limited to the gigantic, which "assum[ed] a range of connotations from heroic and public to sublime and spectacular" (Rugoff, 1997: 11).[164]

While monumentalization has thus enjoyed its critical function of challenging the viewer's accustomed notions of scale, miniaturization has rarely been deemed to have this sort of potential. As Rugoff suggests, very small artworks were "typically looked down upon as timid and unadventurous, domesticated by a size shared with doll-house miniatures, souvenirs, and precious collectibles" that made most modernists view tiny-ness as "a forfeiture of artistic authority" (1997: 11). The critical and subversive potential of the miniature, the minute, and the miniscule—perhaps due to their associations with interiority, domesticity, femininity, and exposed materiality brought about by their requisite intensive bodily labor and craft and exaggerated attention to detail—has hardly been explored (Schor, 1987; Stewart, 2001).

Yet again, the miniature bears on scale in the phenomenological sense as a formal quality capable of inducing awareness and provoking thought. However, as Gaston Bachelard reminds us, one "must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small" (1994: 150). If the tiny object has subversive potential, it is not "through any logical dialectic of opposites (of large and small), but in a destabilizing seduction that seems to turn our world upside down" (Rugoff, 1997: 15). The miniature is not a critique of monumentality and gigantism, but, rather, as

[164] In his article "Size Matters" (2000), Robert Morris identifies a "Wagner effect" that was initiated by Jackson Pollock and can also be observed in works by Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, the minimalist sculptures of Richard Serra, and contemporary installation works by Bill Viola and James Turrell. This "really big art," writes Morris, is literally hard to put in the museum. He observes that the work "falling under the rubric of the Wagner effect would be aimed at servicing the upper echelons of a would-be-ruling class, who, in their driven generosity, demand those vast and sanctified spaces of the museum as testimony to the importance of their class and self-congratulatory public service" (482).

Stewart puts it, "of the poverty of naïve materialism confusing physical scale with subjective or social importance" (1997: 75).

The Ottomans did not associate physical scale with social importance, at least when it came to the art of painting. For Ottoman patrons of art—usually the sultans, their immediate family members, and high-ranking officials—small paintings on manuscript pages did not signify interiority, domesticity, or femininity. Instead, they were symbols of wealth, power, and grandeur.[165] Like most of the Muslim societies contemporary with theirs, Ottomans used two Arabic words to refer to what we now call miniature painting. These terms were *taswir* and *naqsh*, and were used interchangeably.[166] *Taswir* was widely used to describe different types of representational media, including painting, drawing, underglass painting, and paper cutting (*kaat'i*). It means describing something verbally or visually and designing and giving form to (something). As a noun it refers to the outcome of such an action, be it a text or an image. Linguistically, it derives from the second form of the verb *sawwara*, meaning to create, to form, to fashion but also to depict, to represent, to illustrate.[167] In the passive form it means to imagine, to conceive, and to think; hence the word *tasawwur*, which can refer to imagination, idea, and concept.[168]

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[165] Book collections were not only a symbol of sophistication but also of sovereignty. Apart from imperial commissions, books would enter the Ottoman collections as gifts from neighboring empires or as war booty. See, for example, Çağman and Tanindi (1996) for the book traffic between the Ottomans and Safavids in the 16th century. They point out that the Safavid illustrated manuscripts found their way to the imperial collections as gifts presented to the Ottoman Sultans by Safavid ambassadors sent on various missions, but a considerable number were either purchased or received as gifts during the wars by Ottoman generals, bureaucrats, and provincial governors.

[166] Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic in the twentieth century and the establishment of art history departments, the use of the adapted term "minyatür" superseded the previous terms of *taswir* and *naqsh*. There is no exact date given for this shift. In a personal email conversation, Günsel Renda pointed out the role of European publications concerning Islamic and Ottoman art employing the term miniature and noted that their inclusion into the curriculum might have initiated the process. The shift from *taswir* and *naqsh* to *minyatür* was quite effective: today, even though both terms are still used in contemporary Turkish, the usage of the imported phrase "miniature painting" has supplanted the previous two terms to the extent that even in academia, the art of book illumination is called "*minyatür*."

[167] *Sawwara* is a tricky word because of its use in the Koran. It is used in reference to creation in *surahs* such as 40:64 (two times); 64:3 (two times); 7:11; 3:6; 82:8; 59:24. *Al-musawwir*, "the Fashioner," is one of the names of God in the Koran. He fashions the creation by giving it form and color and bestows each creature with "every detail of its complicated spiritual and physical existence." This use of the word has been cited in arguments about the ban on image production; see, for example, Mazhar Ipşiroğlu (2005).

[168] As a generic term, *taswir* makes no differentiation between different practices of art using different media. For example, in modern Arabic, *taswir* refers also to photography.

Consequently, the term not only indicates creativity but also stresses that artistic practice is an intellectual and cognitive interaction with its artistic material.

The second term, *naqsh*, refers specifically to the art of miniature painting.[169] It means to color, adorn, and ornament something. In compound verb form (followed by the auxiliary *etmek*, to do, to make, to perform in Turkish) it means to engrave (something) in one's mind or memory or to make something effective and permanent. *Naqsh* is a verbal noun derived from the verb *naqasha*, *yanqushu* which means to paint and to engrave. It also refers to every kind of elegant and detailed handwork, from embroidery to woodcut printing to jewel making. Seen in relation to the term *taswir*, *naqsh* emphasizes the body (hand) in the making of the work, whereas *taswir* highlights the intellectual processes involved in the production of the image. The interchangeable use of the terms in reference to book illustration invokes two dimensions of artistic production. *Naqsh* invokes the material aspects of image production by pointing to bodily processes, while *taswir* brings forth the faculty of imagination and thought.

These two processes involved in artistic production highlighted by the "original" Ottoman terminology can be taken as theoretical apertures that may guide us to an understanding of the viewer's relation to the miniature as an intellectual and embodied one. I propose to take the European term "miniature," with its emphasis on smallness, as a companion on this theoretical trip in the hope that its "upside-down logic" might land us straight back on our feet. To be able to do that, we should first acknowledge the "ideal" space of encounter. We will consider the space of the miniature; we will open the book.

[169] *Resm* was also used, but it generally referred to a special kind of miniature painting that is made only in black ink without the application of additional colors. See Mahir (1989).

Looking at the Book

> The book sits before me, closed and unread; it is an object, a set of surfaces. But opened, it seems revealed; its physical aspects give way to abstraction and a nexus of new temporalities.
>
> Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 37

Walter Benjamin famously wrote that the mechanical reproducibility of a work of art sweeps away the aura of the original as well as the conditions of the ritual encounter between the work and the viewer (1969a). Perhaps the ritual aspect of seeing the original of an artwork is best preserved in the case of Ottoman miniature paintings: their public availability, after all, is quite limited. Most museums keep their manuscript collections in special archives, out of public sight. Therefore, the encounter with the miniature in a manuscript brought out of an archive involves a set of rituals. The book is gently placed on a special book holder or a cushion and the researcher is given a pair of gloves to wear. Wearing the sterilized gloves, one can finally become acquainted with the book as physical object.

Once held, the book asserts its weight, reveals its hardness as a three-dimensional object. It is a set of surfaces, as Stewart writes, and as such it is tactile and spatial. Joanna Drucker argues that the physicality of the book is fundamental to its meaning: the "weight of paper, covers, endpapers or insets, fold-outs or enclosures all contribute to the experience of the book" (2004: 197). Above all, the book requires that it be opened. So does *Rawdat al-Safa*. As Keith A. Smith notes, the act of turning the pages discloses the order of viewing and places the book in time (2000: 64). He argues that the book is a single experience, a compound picture made up of many separate sheets. In the codex form—such as the manuscript in question—"this single experience is revealed in slivers" (64). Never seen all at once, its totality is "perceived and exists only as retention of afterimage in the mind" (64).

Because the book is bound, the reader is encouraged to follow the predetermined arrangement of its pages. Yet the illustrations in a book have a visual charm that asserts itself over the ordinariness of the letters and might attract the reader's attention. For the non-Persian "readers" of the *Rawdat al-Safa*—such as me—the regular right-to-left flow of the Arabic letters will offer a different experience. Instead of reading the letters, which would be the expected act, "we"

non-Persian readers tend to look at the calligraphic letters. This uninitiated act of looking *at* writing requires that we understanding the act of reading in a novel manner. It points to a strict separation between the two modalities involved in the act of seeing: the optical modality of looking and the cognitive modality of reading.

Reading always—except in the case of Braille—involves the modality of looking even though the interwovenness of the optical and the cognitive is hardly acknowledged. The unreadable text makes the separation of two modalities tangible, as the viewer finds herself "just looking" instead of reading the text. Before the page, the anticipated reader becomes an accidental viewer as the visual properties of the written forms override their linguistic function. The handwritten character of the text furthers such a separation of modalities. Handwriting, in comparison to the printed text, highlights the visual qualities of letters, such as thickness, proportion, and rhythm between them. The "unintentional" viewer will find that such traits of handwriting tickle her "*l'oeil interieur*" or "interior eye," as Drucker calls it (1998: 103). What might be called "the aesthetics of handwriting" is invoked: the cognitive act of reading is suspended in the favor of the flow and the movement of the writing hand.[170]

Following such an aesthetics of handwriting, one would eventually arrive at the miniature that depicts Timur's army attacking the fortress on a left-hand page somewhere in the middle of the book. To the immediate right of the image, the written text continues to refer back to the previous pages of the manuscript.[171] Such an encounter reminds us that even though it can be regarded independently the image is, in fact, part of the text. For the actual reader of the manuscript, the text progresses forward on the left side in the text boxes placed above and below the miniature. Indeed, the upper text continues the sentence on the right page; therefore the reader of the manuscript would finish reading the sentence only within the image. For "us," the text boxes function in a similar way even though we cannot recognize that the

[170] I am not going to expand on the aesthetics of the handwriting here. For in-depth discussion of handwriting, see Sonja Neef (2000). There are many works on the subject of Arabic calligraphy. For a recent and inspiring study, see Valérie Gonzalez (2001), especially Chapter 5. For the recent uses of Islamic calligraphy in contemporary art practice in relation to unreadability and the aesthetics of writing, see Fırat (2006).

[171] Note that the manuscript pages are referred to as "folios"—meaning that two opposing pages are considered to be one and, for the sake of pagination, the one on the right is labeled (a), the one on the left (b).

text is incomplete. Separated from their linguistic function, the letters within the miniature provide visual continuity between the image and the main text and offer a way for its reader to start "reading" the image.

Pursuing the logic and the movement of reading the text, and given the right-to-left flow of the Arabic alphabet, the viewer would enter the image from the top right, below the castle where the soldiers attack Timur's army. The soldiers would direct her eyes to the left of the miniature, toward Timur's soldiers. Once we have reached the headgear of the figure furthest on the left, our eyes would scroll down and reach the tree on the right edge and, continuing the same movement from right to left, we would then follow the gazelle-leopard-wolf line. Scrolling down once more, we would finally alight on Timur's army as it emerges between colorful hills, marching toward the right of the picture plane, curving toward the left, passing the ravine and arriving at the encampment area. This pattern of reading the miniature is quite different from the spiraling pattern that I suggested in the opening section of this chapter. Leaving for a later discussion the different semantic possibilities offered by these two paths of reading, I suggest that what these modes have common can illuminate the ways in which the miniature relates to the body of the viewer and to the visual experience in general.

The Horizontal Image

Both patterns of reading the miniature promote a horizontal and curvilinear mode of looking. Such a mode, no doubt, follows the flow of reading: moving right to left, scrolling down, and tracing the spiraling army as it curves from right to left, and then scrolling upwards. The miniature follows the movement of the text, but not too strictly. The miniature is like a text in which the viewer/reader is left free to wander among the letters, a text in which the hierarchical relation between up and down has been disrupted. The act of reading taints the way we look at the image and guides our look within the picture plane to move from right to left and vice versa. This pattern of looking literally reads the image.

This mode of viewing is further encouraged by the horizontal orientation of the image. Similar to the way a book would be positioned, the miniature *lies* in front of the viewer. The viewer looks at the image from above, and, rather than standing in

front of the vertical tableau of Damisch and Wajcman, she positions herself so that her body and the miniature are separated by a 90-degree angle. She inter-faces the miniature in a horizontal manner that lingers somewhere between reading and looking. Such a horizontal orientation is starkly opposed to what Benjamin once called "the dictatorial perpendicular." In "One-Way Street" (1928), he states that, centuries ago, scripture "began gradually to lie down, passing from the upright inscription to the manuscript resting on sloping desks before finally taking itself to bed in the printed book." Then it began to rise again from the ground: "The newspaper is read more in the vertical than in the horizontal plane, while film and advertisement force the printed word entirely into the dictatorial perpendicular" (1996b: 456).

Taking Benjamin's idea of the dictatorial perpendicular as a point of departure, Rosalind Krauss argues that such a hegemony of the vertical should be related to the Gestalt psychologists' conceptualization of the visual field defined in relation to the self-image of the human subject. This perceptual space is "subject to gravitation, ventrally sighted, dextrally favored" as a projection that returns "the perceiver's own potential image as though in an invisible mirror" (1997a: 89). She argues that Jacques Lacan takes up the unified "good-form" of the Gestalt body in his essay on the mirror stage (1936), in which the image seen in the mirror—the prefigurative of the "I"—would be seen upright. Krauss contends that verticality appears a necessary ingredient in the Gestalt/Imaginary brew, linking signification/meaning with the human being's uniquely upright posture, a position that orients her to her surroundings. This positioning establishes a set of values based on "up" and "down," "high" and "low."[172]

In their book *Formless* (1997), Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois elaborate on Georges Bataille's discussion of the process of "horizontalization" that challenges the verticality of the human body within the visual field. Rephrasing Bataille, Bois

[172] Krauss states that the mirror image might be seen as a Narcissus-like position, bending over the reflective horizontal surface (given Lacan's intense fascination with the Narcissus created by Caravaggio), which might confirm this site of the image as a horizontal plane. This understanding, argues Krauss, would overlook the configuration of the image wrought by the painting itself: the composition of the painting wheels around the central point established by the figure's projecting knee. Therefore the painting itself converts the actual bodily position into a visual Gestalt. It thereby asserts that "for the subject of vision, the subject who is using the image to stabilize his own ego around a center of consciousness, all images—whether seen on a horizontal plane or not—will enter the space of his or her imagination as upright: aligned with the verticality of that viewer's own body" (1997a: 90).

writes, “man is proud of being erect [….] but this pride is founded on a repression [….] Present architecture, by means of which his horizontal gaze traverses a vertical field, is a travesty” (1997: 26).[173] Perhaps the institution of the tableau was, from the beginning, complicit with such a travesty by its imitation of the anthropomorphic scale and reverberation of the “*l'uomo quadrato*,” who faces the visual field as an erect T.

Similarly, in the section entitled “The Flatbed Picture Plane” of his 1972 essay “Other Criteria,” Leo Steinberg addresses the problem of the verticality of the tableau (using “picture,” from the English terminology). He suggests that from the old masters to abstract expressionism, “the conception of the picture as representing a world, some sort of worldspace which reads on the picture plane in correspondence with the erect human posture” was shared as an axiom dictating how the picture plane was conceived (1972: 82). In such a conception, the top of the tableau corresponds to the point where we hold our heads aloft, while its lower edge gravitates to the spot where we place our feet. By these correspondences, Steinberg argues, the tableau imitates the sense data experience of the “normal erect posture” in a “natural world” (84). Therefore, he continues, “the Renaissance picture plane affirms verticality as its essential condition”; the works of Picasso, Rothko, Matisse, and Pollock did not cause this condition to be superseded (84).

Steinberg argues that the flatbed picture plane—as it is utilized in the works of Robert Rauschenberg and Dubuffet, for example—insists on a radically new orientation, in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of a visual experience of nature but of an operational process. He argues:

> [I]t is not the actual physical placement of the image that counts. There is no law against hanging a rug on a wall, or reproducing a narrative picture as a mosaic floor. What I have in mind is the psychic address of the image, its

[173] Bataille usually relates the horizontal posture to animality. Freud also emphasizes the difference between the human being’s erect posture and animal horizontality. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), he relates the origin of civilization to the primacy of upright posture. He writes: “The fateful process of civilization would thus have set in with man’s adoption of the erect posture. From that point the chain of events would have proceeded through the devaluation of olfactory stimuli and the isolation of the menstrual period to the time when visual stimuli were paramount and the genitals become visible, and thence to the continuity of sexual excitation the founding of the family and so to the threshold of human civilization” (1961, 54 n.1). Civilization is the effect of the repression of smell and its replacement by the sense of vision, which results in the privileging of the erect posture.

> special mode of imaginative confrontation, and I tend to regard the tilt of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal as expressive of the most radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture. (1972: 84)[174]

Bois points out that the strict demarcation dividing the vertical and the horizontal axes corresponds, in fact, to a separation between the realms of the "pure visible" and the "carnal." The pure visible refers to the visual field perceived vertically, whereas the carnal sphere is the space occupied by our bodies, the space in which we move. According to Bois, the partition between the two has been "theorized since the Renaissance by means of the conception of painting 'as a window opened onto the world'" (1997: 27).[175] The impossible caesura between the visible and the carnal is related to another opposition, namely the relation between "painting's vertical section and completely covered surface" and "the horizontal and diagrammatic space of writing" (Bois, 1997: 27). Bois' understanding here is akin to that of Benjamin and Steinberg.[176]

Taking place in the realm of the carnal as well as the diagrammatic space of writing and reading, the process of horizontalization is a double operation. For Krauss and Bois, it involves the rejection of the privileging of that which exists to be seen horizontally from a vertical position (e.g., pictures on a wall) and undoing the verticality inherent in what has been deemed proper art. Refusing the gestures of the standard technique, horizontal paintings such as Jackson Pollock's open up a gap between the work's horizontal orientation and the viewer's vertical positioning in front of them. [177]

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[174] Benjamin posited a similar opposition between horizontality and verticality that exists regardless of the viewer's physical encounter with the image. It is the "internal meaning" of the image that remains horizontal for Benjamin, as it does for Steinberg. Benjamin theorized the mode of imaginative confrontation mentioned by Steinberg through a distinction between drawing and painting. Conceiving of these two media as "two cuts though the world's substance," he considers the longitudinal section of painting and the cross-section of certain pieces of graphic art (1996b: 82). He argues that the longitudinal cut seems to be that of representation that somehow contains objects, while the cross-section seems symbolic in that it contains signs. (82) Benjamin suggests that the horizontal cut is reminiscent of reading; it is, as such, affiliated with signs.

[175] In the following chapter I focus on the metaphor of the window in relation to the discourse of transparency and framing.

[176] Steinberg borrows the term "flatbed" from the flatbed printing press, "a horizontal bed on which a horizontal printing surface rests" (1972: 82).

[177] According to Krauss, Jackson Pollock's drip paintings—in which the canvas, literally brought low, is laid horizontally on the floor to be painted on the ground, thus making these works initially

Such an experience, involving an uncoupling between the positioning of the image and the viewer, amounts to a one-way act of horizontalization that takes place within the image. In other words, it is only the image that bears the process of horizontalization. The viewer's positioning remains intact, albeit disturbed. In contrast to this "half-way" horizontalization, I will argue that the horizontal orientation of the miniature is accompanied by a horizontalization of the viewing position of the sort that challenges the viewer both physically and cognitively.

Krauss and Bois' endorsement of horizontality in modern art, inspired by Benjamin, Bataille, and Steinberg, is an attempt to understand the ways in which horizontal image relates to the viewer as an alternative to the operation of the vertical image. The diverse theorizations that I have invoked can productively be brought to bear on the orientation of the miniature so as to open up a discussion of an alternative bodily interaction with the image and a different notion of pictorial representation that is highlighted by the horizontal imaginary.

Horizontal Viewing

As elements in a book, the Ottoman miniatures were meant to be seen by the viewer as she held the volume in hand or as she peered into the book after it had been placed on special X-shaped book trestles called *rahle*. Already, such a positioning of the book makes a horizontal cut through the vertical visual field, and it demands that the viewer sits down and adopt a bent-over position as she enters the intimate space of the book. Consequently, the miniature will be encountered in a bodily posture reminiscent of reading as well as writing. Such is the case with the Timur miniature. As I have argued, it invites its viewer to read the image. But it also demands that she position her body as if she were reading a book. Thus, the miniature challenges the ideal of the upright viewer who stands within the vertically perceived visual field at the moment of the encounter. The miniature's viewer would of necessity be bent

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horizontal—are perfect example of these processes, (1997b: 93-97). Steinberg argues that Pollock's works are revelations to which we relate visually as from the top of a columnar body. He writes, "Pollock indeed poured and dripped his pigment upon canvases laid on the ground, but this was an expedient. After the first color skeins had gone down, he would tack the canvas on to a wall - to get acquainted with it, he used to say; to see where it wanted to go. He lived with the painting in its uprighted state, as with a world confronting his human posture" (1972: 84).

over the book, her face turned away from the vertical visual field and directed downwards into the horizontal space of the miniature.

This posture of viewing determined by the miniature is different from what the vertically oriented image proposes. While the viewer of the tableau stands *in front* of the image in an erect posture, the viewer of the miniature bends her body above the image and faces downwards. The downward look and the space it opens up between the viewer and the image constitute an intimate and solitary field between the two that takes the viewer away from the realm of the visual and brings her into the arena of the carnal.

This effect resonates with Rugoff's proposition that small objects draw us closer to them and that such forward movement parallels a mental process:

> [T]he more closely we examine minute details, the less we notice the gulf in size that separates us. The act of paying attention is in itself a kind of magnifying glass [….] [T]his charges our experience of the object, imbuing it with an almost hallucinatory acuity [….] Despite the negligible physicality of tiny work, its effect on us may be surprisingly visceral. (1997:14-15)

Stewart warns us that in approaching the miniature, "our bodies erupt into a confusion of before-unrealized surfaces" (1993: 70). Such confusion occurs when, as we hold the miniature object in hand, we sense that "our hand is no longer in proportion with its world; instead our hand becomes a form of undifferentiated landscape, the body a kind of background" (70).

Our encounter with the Timur miniature bears a similar corporal challenge, if not confusion. In contrast to the tableau, which has proportions based on those of the human body, Stewart suggests that the miniature's measure is the hand (Stewart, 1993: 46). Even though Stewart writes on "miniature books," so small as to fit in the palms of their readers, the Timur miniature encourages a comparable form of bodily interaction in which the sense of touch is provoked. Although we cannot hold the whole image in our hand at once, its scale is still to be measured in proportion to the hand. The viewer can grasp it in her hand; the depicted figures are comparable in size to a finger or thumb. This physical correspondence is furthered by the leaning position of the viewer's body necessitated by the miniature's horizontal orientation. With the body lowered, the hand is placed in-between the eyes of the viewer and the

image. Thus the vertical "good form" of gestalt body assumed by the tableau is fractured; the bits and pieces of the viewer's body become visible to herself. The encounter takes place not in the space of the purely visible dominated by the eye but rather in the carnal realm occupied by our bodies. This is no longer the space "subject to gravitation, ventrally sighted, dextrally favored" (Krauss, 1997a: 89). As the body curves into itself, the law of gravity starts to crumble; the notions of up vs. down and high vs. low lose their certainty with regard to the construction of the space within the miniature.

And indeed, in her encounter with the Timur miniature, the viewer starts losing the sense of what's up and what's down, what's high and what's low. This is simply the continuation of a process that had already been implied by the bent posture of her body. If the miniature were to be seen vertically, that is, "fronto-parallel to the plane of vision" (Krauss, 1997: 91), it would follow the vertical law of gravity that it instead defies most visibly, perhaps, in the "bottom" of the picture plane. In vertical orientation, the tree drawn by the side of the ravine with a fox on its branches will be seen as if it were upside-down in relation to the rest of the miniature. Similarly, the flowers scattered all around the miniature—most notably on the blue-purple hill by the ravine and right beneath the tree in Timur's encampment—would seem inverted. However, such a travesty of perception occurs only if the miniature is made to follow the logic of the tableau and the vertical Gestalt, as Krauss calls it.

The operation of lowering oneself out of the vertical and into the horizontal involves "tipping things over, making them stumble, fall, lie in the mud" (Bois and Krauss, 1997: 29). The Timur miniature does precisely this. The flattened canopy and the bridge over the ravine defy the vertical look that would be directed at them; they direct the viewer's eyes above them and invite a horizontal look within a horizontal field. In such a field, the miniature encourages the assembling and merging of the letter and the figure, the textual and the visual, the act of reading and the act of looking.

The encounter with the miniature does not follow the sense data experience of the "normal erect posture" in a "natural world," to follow Steinberg. The event of looking at the miniature proposes a physical retreat from the verticality of the visual as the viewer turns downwards toward the space of the book and toward her body. The viewer who closes herself over the miniature and over her own body detaches

herself from the pure visual. She occupies the realm of the carnal, where the body operates within oppositional tensions: getting closer and moving away, scrolling up and down or from right to left and vice versa. As such, the miniature proposes a total horizontalization of the image and of the viewer's body and intellect. The horizontal image allows the viewer to experience that which might diverge from the laws of the "natural world." By so doing, the miniature enables one to go beyond conventional perceptions of dimension and scale.

Time, too, is in play here. In what follows, I discuss the ways in which the representation of time in the Timur miniature offers us a miniaturized, condensed temporality that challenges the norm of linear temporality and gives way to a nexus of new temporalities.

Pregnant to "a Nexus of New Temporalities"

Bachelard, writing on the "man with a magnifying glass," argues that looking through a magnifying glass conditions an entry into the world at the moment when we have to accept heretofore unnoticed details (1994: 155).[178] Thus, Bachelard argues, the minuscule is a narrow gate, but it opens up an entire world. The passage out of this narrow gate leads us to enter the miniature world and, from there, to "large issues from small, not through the logical law of a dialectics of contraries, but thanks to the liberation from all obligations of dimensions, a liberation that is a special characteristic of the activity of the imagination" (154-55).

At the focal point in the Timur miniature, the place where Timur was to receive the object presented to him by his servant, we are offered the possibility of entering the miniature world of the image. This scene attracts and captures the viewer's attention. Within the temporal structure of the image, it appears to be taking place in the present tense. Titley explains the temporal structure of the miniature as follows:

[178] In the chapter entitled "Miniature" in his *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard analyzes literary descriptions of tiny objects as a way of entering the world in detail. His discussion of the "man with the magnifying glass" starts with an elaboration of the flower descriptions made by the botanists. Later on, the man with the magnifying glass becomes the metaphor for paying attention to details and taking in the "world as though it were quite new to the observer," who is "a fresh eye before a new object" (155).

> Timur resting in a mountain clearing in Mazandaran during his campaigns, *while* his army attacks a fortress in the background. Other soldiers *are traveling* around a mountain pass and crossing a deep ravine [….]. (1981: 60, emphasis added)

Seeming to propose that the events depicted in the miniature take place simultaneously, Titley suggests a unified temporal structure. However, the compositional structure of the miniature might allow us to construct a different representational temporality.

As I argued earlier on, the miniature can be read by following two potential reading trajectories. The first starts from the middle of the miniature, from where the marching troops appear by the mountain pass. Following the soldiers on the bridge in the lower part, we move on to the place where Timur and his company take their respite and then, ultimately, reach the upper part, where the battle takes place. Alternatively, one can enter the picture plane from the upper part and follow the directionality dictated by the text. This path starts from the fortress and proceeds to the battle, then moves on to the focal point and eventually ends in the lower part of the picture plane. These two potential reading paths offer us alternatives to the time track suggested by Titley. Instead of simultaneity, they put the events in succession.

In relation to the focal point, the march of the troops and the battle scene can be read as taking place in the past and future, respectively. This reading demonstrates that the miniature encapsulates successive events that take place at different times as well as in varying locations.[179] By using such a technique in which different temporalities come together in one image, the miniature creates its own temporality. This temporality accords with Stewart's argument that the miniature does not attach itself to lived historical time.

She writes,

> Unlike the metonymic world of realism, which attempts to erase the break between the time of everyday life and the time of narrative by mapping one perfectly upon the other, the metaphoric world of the miniature makes

[179] Such a narrative technique is not alien to the Ottoman miniature painting even though, by the mid-seventeenth century, we can observe a tendency to unify the pictorial plane temporally and spatially.

> everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself. The reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday lifeworld […]. (2001: 65)

Similarly, the condensed and compressed temporalities within the Timur miniature are in stark contrast with the suspended present-ness of the everyday viewing experience. The difference between the two diverse temporal experiences manifests itself in what Stewart calls the miniature time. She cites a psychological experiment conducted at the School of Architecture of the University of Tennessee, which indicated a direct correlation between physical scale and the viewer's perception of duration. She writes that, as the scale of an image or other perceptual stimulus decreases, the viewer's experience of time is extended. Thus, five minutes of clock time may seem like half an hour (66). Similarly, the condensed temporality of the Timur miniature encapsulates a "normal" viewing time and prolongs the perception of duration.

The extension of the viewing time entails that the viewer does not grasp the image all at once, as if it were what Diderot called a hieroglyph, which enables the viewer to absorb the picture instantaneously. Seeing an image is not an immediate action but a process, an event, or a negotiation between viewer and image, as I have argued in previous chapters. If the miniature object necessitates its miniature viewing time, the Timur painting will make such a temporal expansion tangible. The patterns of traveling in the miniature—following the chain of movement from one soldier to the others, alighting on unexpected details such as an animal atop a tree, or landing on the suspended hands of Timur and the servant—will stretch the viewing process far beyond the *augenblick*. This experience of the image and of duration coincides with the temporal structure of the miniature, which also unravels itself through the viewer's act of reading the image.

Such concentration and prolongation of viewing time explodes in a narrative instance that seems to unite different temporalities within the miniature. The moment of tension between Timur and his servant (what I have called the focal point of the miniature) can be seen as a "pregnant moment" that synchronizes *all* of the miniature's events in one common instant. The pregnant moment, a term coined by Gotthold Lessing in *Laöcoön: On the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), is an arrested single moment that represents the entire story in one scene. In light of this

definition, however, the gesture between the two figures can hardly be taken as a pregnant moment, as it seems like the entire story has *already* been visualized in the miniature. By way of clarification, I will discuss in what follows the ways in which this tension functions as a pregnant moment connecting past, future, and present events—even though we cannot grasp this operation at first glance (Figure 29).

Figure 29. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

In her book *Narratology*, Mieke Bal explains that the pregnant moment—representing "a single moment but one which can only be understood as following the past and announcing the future"—is the pictorial equivalent of a crisis in narrative (1997: 211). Following Bal, I would like to suggest that the frozen gesture between the two figures pointing at an invisible object of exchange corresponds to such a crisis. It is the knot of the image of which disentanglement would unravel other tensions in the miniature. Once the tension is resolved, the troops will finally arrive at the encampment area and the arrow of the soldier in the blue garment will pierce the breast of the soldier on horseback. Moreover, the leopard will attack the wolf and scare the gazelle away; the fox in the tree will attack the bird and perhaps flush it out of the tree (Figure 30 and 33).

Figure 30. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

As such, this suspended moment directs our attention to past events as well as to the future battle even though we experience the miniature in an implied "present tense." This gesture is "pregnant" with another time that cannot be incorporated within the miniature—namely, the moment when the battle *will have been* won. It is a future, invoked in the present of the image within the pregnant moment, that has not yet arrived and is still to be determined but that nevertheless dictates retrospectively, in its turn, the past, which *will have been* for that future. That is to say, the tension between the figures is "pregnant" to a future when the fortress will have fallen.

There, in the focal point of the miniature, we see the gestures between the figures without an object of exchange, which is left as an enigma, as a failure of representation, or even an instance of non-representation. Lessing argues that the pregnant moment "as the instant right before the climax or catastrophe [….] designates a lack that the viewer fills in by seeing" (quoted in Grootenboer, 2005: 176, n4). As a divergent form of the pregnant moment, the tension between the two figures indeed designates a lack. Yet the viewer cannot fill in this lack by seeing because there is nothing to see. According to Lessing, the pregnant moment ought to give the viewer's imagination free rein: "The more we see, the more we add in our imaginations, the more we must think we see" (quoted in Grootenboer, 2005: 24).

Yet the pregnant moment in the Timur miniature contains implications for seeing, reading, and imagining. Bachelard writes that in looking at a miniature, "unflagging attention is required to integrate all the detail" (1994: 159). The invisible object is one of those details that call for such constant scrutiny. Even though it is not visible as a painterly mark, it draws the viewer's attention to it as a recognizable event suggested by the gesture between the two figures. The suspended gesture and

its absent object conceived as a pregnant moment encourage the viewer to concentrate on the lack, which would not be filled by the viewer's seeing but by her performing a narrative act. The absent object, as a detail capable of inserting meaning in its absence, allows the viewer to perform such a narrative reading based on the interaction of pictorial details.

The pregnant moment conveys a future-to-come, a "will have been," invoked through the relation between the absent object and the fortress. The fortress pinpoints this future to come, albeit in a complex way (Figure 31). First, it falls outside the image's frame, suggesting thereby that its fall is contingent on what is presented by the image. It is in the picture, but not quite. Its outlines touch the field where the battle is taking place, hence it is symbiotically connected to the image. So is its conquest.

Figure 31. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

Second, in contrast to the way it is included in the composition, the fortress is separated from the rest of the miniature on the basis of an ontological difference. The figures within the image are fully colored, whereas the fortress appears to be incomplete. It consists of mere outlines accompanied by a thin application of white paint. On a semantic level, the distinctiveness of the fortress suggests a temporal break with the colored surface of the miniature.[180] We can see the events taking place in the simple tenses of past, present, and future—marching troops, Timur at rest, the

[180] Technically speaking, the act of drawing belongs to an earlier stage of painting that comes before the application of hues. In this capacity we can read this difference as an indicator of the process of painting and argue that the fortress was either added later or it was the last thing in the image to be painted and was left unfinished. In either case, the fortress arrives late even though it refers to the previous phase of drawing.

battle joined—clearly and in full color. They are rendered as full figures that can be examined in minute detail. The fortress, on the contrary, is perceived as an undone, not-yet-materialized quasi-figure. This figure of the fortress refers to a predestined future that has not yet arrived. Even though it cannot be seen clearly, it can be grasped as a ghostly outline.

For the careful eye, the fortress is not the only unfinished figure in the miniature. The two birds resting in the tree in the upper right and lower parts of the image are not painted either (Figure 32 and 33). Based on the similarities among these details—the fortress, the birds, and the invisible object—their interaction constructs a curvilinear syntagm. The figure of the bird as an indexical sign for news to be delivered might help us to read this hypothetical visual sentence hidden in the main narrative of the miniature. The quasi-figures of the birds, standing for news of an event that has not yet happened—Timur's victory—bridge the semantic and temporal gap between the fortress and the absent object. When the fortress falls, the birds will fly and deliver the news of victory and hence the exchange between the servant and the king will have been completed.

Figure 32 and Figure 33. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

In such a reading, the invisible object is not supplanted with an object visibly refilling its place but is taken as a narrative detail that interacts with other pictorial elements on the basis of its incommensurable absence. This reading demonstrates that the miniature alludes to an object/event that cannot be represented. And as it cannot be represented, its absence brings us news, not of victory, but of another state of painting. It gives us a symptom.

What is Being Handed to Timur, or the Symptom

In Chapter 1, I discussed the operation of pictorial details via a close-up analysis of the "Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise" miniature. I argued that tiny or compositionally marginal pictorial elements open up different reading possibilities than those entailed by an iconographic interpretation. All the details on which I focused, with the exception of Eve's missing navel, are visually definable. Each detail's "contour delimits a represented object, something that has a place or rather has *its place*, in the mimetic space" (Didi-Huberman, 2005: 268). The invisible object in the Timur miniature, however, functions differently than those details.[181]

In my view, the absent object points to the "fact" that there are voids within the representational structures. In such gaps, as Norman Bryson puts it, "depiction fails or is blocked as a collection of legible signs, where depiction mounts a measure of resistance to the whole mimetic project" (1993: 336).[182] The absent object refers to such a failure of representation. It pierces a hole in the logic of representation. It is an accident in the miniature, yet it is sovereign. It taints the whole image with its absence; it spreads its contamination all over not only because it is compositionally focal but also because it is semantically at the center of the image. It is a senseless, unformed, incomprehensible, and precarious gesture; hence it is accidental. Yet it is sovereign because its "blurred" meaning is linked to a destiny within the miniature; it binds the image to itself.

Georges Didi-Huberman calls such sovereign accidents symptoms. He borrows the notion from Freud and yet, in retaining the clinical overtones of the term, he puts it in the service of a critical paradigm. He writes,

> A sovereign accident is called, strictly speaking, a *symptom*: a word understood here to have all the extension and semiological rigor that Freud bestowed on it. A symptom [….] is, for example, the moment, the

[181] It can be argued that the absent navel of Eve functions similar to the way the absent object does. However, the narrative potentiality of Eve's absent navel stems from Adam's overemphasized navel. Even though it is absent, the viewer expects the definite form of the navel; therefore it works in line with what Didi-Huberman calls the detail principle (2005).

[182] Bryson talks of "those qualities of the image that stand outside reason, qualities that do not correspond to meaning (the legible) and cannot be apprehended in terms of mimesis (the visible)" (1993: 337).

> unpredictable and immediate *passage* of a body into aberrant, critical state of hysterical convulsions, of extravagance in every moment and posture: gestures having lost their "representivity," their code [….] [N]o "message," no "communication" can any longer emanate from such a body. (Didi-Huberman, 2005: 260)

Such pictorial accidents challenge mainstream humanist art-historical inquiry, which is based on specific, certain knowledge of the art object. Having lost their representative capacity, and bearing no message, symptoms confront the conventional art-historical tone of certainty; they become passages that open up our knowledge about images toward the realm of instability. They bring the possibility of not-knowledge when they unravel the nets of knowledge (2005: 7). As a critical event, a symptom is a singularity, an intrusion, but also an implementation of a signifying structure. Yet the meaning that surges forth through the symptom is expressed "only as an enigma or as the '*appearance "of something,"*' not as a stable set of meanings" (2005: 261).

Figure 34. Detail, "Timur on his expedition to attack Sultan Husayn."

The symptom reveals that figurability is "a process, a power, a not-yet […] an uncertainty, a 'quasi'–existence of the figure" (269). It is a potential figure, a figure figuring or a "pre-figure" that "interrupts ostensibly, from place to place […] the continuity of the picture's representational system" (266). The absent object in the Timur miniature performs precisely the same action. It disturbs the picture by its potentiality, by its quasi-existence that has not been figured. It *happens*, gets through, extravagates in the space of representation and makes a detonation or intrusion in the miniature (268).

Just like Didi-Huberman's examples of *pan*s in the tableaus of Vermeer, which are visible but not recognizable in the system of mimetic representation, we see a patch of color—a brownish line, perhaps a tray?—that cannot easily be named (Figure 34). However, even if we read the patch as a tray we cannot name what it conveys. Therefore, it evokes the expectation of the visible in its absence; it is a symptom in the miniature that functions *in absentia*. It is indeed a process, a power, and a not-yet existence of the figure to come, which has not yet been figured. As such, it is an indicator of lack, not in the mimetic order but in the economy of representation, in the operation of figuration. Unlike Didi-Huberman's *pan*, it does not refer to a binding of mimetic and non-mimetic representation. Rather, in light of my earlier reading of the absent object as news that has not yet been delivered, it points to the operation of figuration and the dialectical relationship between representation and what is beyond representation.

In line with this, the absence can be seen to allude to the impossibility of representing news of a victory that has not yet happened. Such news can be invoked only as a suspended gesture, as an unfinished figure of a bird or an incomplete fortress outline. It can be "materialized" not as a form but only as an absence of figuration. In this respect, it is beyond representation, a temporal impossibility. It is also beyond the logic of representation because of the ontological status of news. Visually, news can be represented either iconically, as in the form of a letter, or indexically, through figures such as a bird or a gesture of a hand. However, news cannot be visually uttered. Didi-Huberman would call this unarticulated and immaterialized "sign" *virtual*. According to him, the term suggests how "the regime of the visual tends to loosen our grip on the 'normal' [….] condition of knowledge" (18). What is invoked in the image is the potentiality of the object, not its actuality. Therefore, it does not give the viewer a certain figure, or the knowledge of an object represented. It produces its effect by calling to the viewer's imagination, but doing so without articulating the certainty of visible knowledge.

The virtual stands in opposition to the "normal" regime of the visual world wherein "we think we know what we are seeing, which is to say wherein we know how to name every appearance that it pleases the eye to capture" (Didi-Huberman, 2005: 28). Obviously, the absent object, even though we can name it as a message, does not belong to the register of the visible—comprising elements of representation,

in the classical sense of the word. Neither does it belong to the invisible since it somehow strikes the viewer's eye yet reaches her by paths that are not visual.

As such, the absence in the miniature points out the paradox of figurability and of the conditions of figuration. It remains an enigma that does not communicate with any object. As I have argued, compositionally the miniature flows toward this absent object as if the viewer's gaze were taken up into a whirlpool that makes nothing visible. Moreover, as the center of such a current, the absent object is pregnant to temporal aspects and a future-to-come that cannot be incorporated by the miniature. In this capacity, it emerges as the symptom, as an immediate passage opening to representation as "containing with itself an underside of that which cannot be represented" (Bryson, 1993: 337).

The absence designates, as a symptom, "another state of painting within the representative system of the picture: a precarious, partial, accidental state"—which is why Didi-Huberman speaks of *passage* from one state to another (2005: 266). Borne through this passage, we end up in the world of the small, the horizontal, and the virtual: the symptoms of what we cannot see through transparent windows.

In the following chapter, I discuss one of the most persistent of all visual metaphors, namely, the window trope. Considering in this regard a seventeenth-century miniature entitled "The Theological School of Gazanfer Ağa" by Ahmed Nakşi, I will argue that even though the metaphor was first invoked to refer to the specific medium of the tableau-window, its metaphorical resonance goes beyond the limits of the medium. The overarching epistemological effect of the window metaphor is a unique juxtaposition of two discourses: transparency and the frame. This concurrence of these two discourses suggests that what is seen is also knowable. I will conclude that the miniature under consideration challenges both discourses by promoting the frame as a threshold between different modes of representation, by "thresholding" the visual, and by bringing to the fore opacity as a mode of visual encounter. In this capacity, the threshold metaphor offers an alternative, albeit not an antidote, to the window metaphor as a means of conceptualizing the position of the viewer in the visual field.

CHAPTER 6: Looking through Metaphors: From the Window toward the Threshold

Throughout this study, there have been instances when I explicitly dwelled on the alleged tension between so-called Eastern and Western visual cultures as it has manifested itself in Ottoman miniatures. I argued against the popular contemporary polarization between the East and the West—reminiscent of the view put forth in Kipling's *Ballad of East and West* (1895)—by showing how the miniatures are sites where a productive visual cross-cultural encounter has taken place.[183] I suggested that the genre of portraiture was one of the realms in which an immense process of negation and negotiation between the two contesting cultural discourses has been played out. Similarly, I discussed how bazaar artists and court miniaturists alike appropriated the style and content of Orientalist costume albums in their attempts to represent everyday life.[184]

In the light of such visual encounters between Europe and the Ottomans, this chapter looks at a seventeenth-century miniature painting entitled "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" (The Theological School of Gazanfer Ağa), executed by Ahmed Nakşi as part of the book *Divan-i Nadiri* (Anthology of Nadiri, c. 1620) (Figure 35). Scholars argue that Ahmed Nakşi created a distinct style of representation in which he combined the imperial style with that of the West, as evinced by "the peculiar perspective seen in architecture, the receding planes, diminishing elements in the background and an interest in representing Europeans" (Atil, 1978: 109). Atil explains the occurrence of these pictorial elements by arguing that Nakşi might have been exposed to sixteenth-century Italian and Dutch engravings kept in the Topkapi seraglio (Figure 36). These engravings, albeit in a "miniaturized" form, exemplify the operation of the window metaphor, which has been pertinent in delineating not only the logic of the tableau but also the seeing subject's encounter with the visible world. According to Atil, since Nakşi has seen the "window," he has attempted to trace its logic in his miniatures by giving a back view of some of the figures in the

[183] The refrain of the poem reads: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,/ Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat,/ But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,/ When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!"

[184] The trajectory I set out here is from the perspective of the Ottomans. For the impact of Ottoman art in Europe, see Renda (2005); for the fashion of Turquerie, see Boer (1994).

foreground, incorporating other figures into the background, and introducing gates, windows, and arches opening onto distant vistas. In contrast to Atil, I argue that the "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature demonstrates that Nakşi might indeed have been exposed to the discourse of painting as a window, yet instead of reproducing its logic in his miniatures, he in fact negotiates with it and ultimately offers us another metaphor for painting, namely, the threshold.

The metaphor of the window, first articulated by Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise *On Painting* (1435), has been one of the most persistent metaphors in the study of visual media. It has been invoked not only in relation to painting but also in delineating the operations of photography, television, cinema, and recent "new media." Anne Friedberg suggests that the metaphor offered a "discourse of translation between the traditions, debates, and objects of study of separate disciplinary domains" (2006: 15). In addition, she argues that it is an "epistemological metaphor" (26) that produces the knowledge of its object and the conditions under which it becomes knowable. I contend that the trope achieves these ends by juxtaposing two interrelated discourses: the discourse of the frame and that of transparency, both of which are burdened with the baggage of the window-object.

The "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature enters into a complex negotiation with both discourses. This negotiation can best be understood by means of another (architectural) metaphor, namely, the threshold. The miniature frame, instead of offering up the painting as an immediate readable object (as suggested by the discourses of the frame and of transparency), encourages a liminal (deriving from *limen*, meaning 'threshold' in Latin) experience of looking that is caught between different modes of representation; looking, reading, and sensing. Moreover, the viewer's acts of looking is "thresholded" by means of horizontal layering of the pictorial plane tainting the encounter with opacity rather than transparency. By so doing, the miniature prompts a process of looking that constantly questions the status of the frame as well as the instantaneous visibility and readability of the image being seen. In this capacity, I explore whether the threshold metaphor provides an epistemology of the visual that can function as an alternative to the epistemology dictated by the window metaphor.

I will suggest that the threshold metaphor should be conceived not as an antidote but as an alternative to the window trope so as to illustrate what the latter lacks and conceals. *Threshold*, functioning as an entrance, the beginning of a state or

action, and an outset and opening, resonates with Didi-Huberman's notion of the state of painting as a passage that I invoked in the previous chapter. Unlike the window, the threshold as an architectural element refers to a passage between two spaces; hence it does not belong to the visual *per se*. In contrast to the immediate visibility offered by the window metaphor, the threshold suggests a gating of the viewer's gaze that obstructs and delays her vision.

As we shall see, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature thresholds the viewer's gaze in a horizontal manner by means of multiple apertures—such as doors, windows, and vaults—that assure the opacity of the miniature. Moreover, its connotations of bordering and delimiting invoke the pictorial frame as a liminal zone. The notion of threshold enables us to understand the miniature as a betwixt-and-between image, at the crossroads of what constitutes its outside and inside. Finally, the threshold as the "limit below which a stimulus is not perceptible" (*OED*) questions the status of both the viewer as the absolute seer/knower and of painting as a knowable and knowledgeable object of her contemplation.

In Gazanfer Ağa's School

"As soon as you open the book as a door, you enter another world, you close the door on this world," writes Hélène Cixous (1993: 20). In Chapter 5, I discussed how the miniature, as a part of the book, opens to another world that is perceived horizontally in a miniaturized time. In this chapter, I follow Cixous' metaphorical insight and open the door of the *Divan-i Nadiri* to step into the world of the miniature—not to liberate ourselves from all obligations imposed by dimensions, as Bachelard (1958) would have it, but to imagine alternative epistemologies of the visual.

Divan-i Nadiri consists of poems, written by Mehmed (b. Abdulgani Emirshah) using the pseudonym Nadiri, that were addressed to sultans, grand viziers, the *Sheykh ül-Islâm* (the highest religious officer), and various other learned dignitaries. Its themes include battles, army marches, the besieging of fortresses, and the sultan's parade as he departs his palace (Atasoy and Çağman, 1974: 68). The volume contains nine miniatures by the court illustrator of the time, Ahmed Nakşi.[185]

[185] Ahmed Nakşi was a renowned astrologer and the official timekeeper at the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul. He was the foremost illustrator of historical manuscripts under the reign of Sultan Osman II. His earliest known work is the series of 49 illustrations he provided for a copy of the *Shaqa'iq al-*

The miniature of the Gazanfer Ağa's school is one of the first miniatures encountered by the viewer upon opening the book. As its title implies, the subject matter of the miniature takes place in and around the Gazanfer Ağa School, which is positioned centrally in the miniature (Figure 35). The script above the double-winged entrance door indicates that the domed edifice is *Medrese-i Gazanfer Ağa*.[186] As the façade of the building has been discarded, the viewer can see the vibrantly ornamented interior of the school and witness the intimate atmosphere of a classroom. Gazanfer Ağa, an Islamic scholar who also commissioned the building of the *Medrese*, lectures the twelve members of the *ulema* (scholars of the Islamic law, "learned men"), who are recognizable by their special headgear. They are positioned diagonally, facing the lecturer. Gazanfer Ağa holds a book in his left hand and marks with his finger the page that he had probably just been reading, while his right hand lies gently on his knee. His pupils, holding on to their books, appear to be interested in what he is saying, except for one student in the middle of the row who is whispering something into the ear of the colleague beside him. This distracted and distracting figure breaks up the stiff atmosphere of the classroom by bringing an element of disarray into the rigid order of the interior.

On both sides of the school building we see the supplementary buildings or "*medrese* cells" of the *Külliye* (complex). They are placed on top of each other with windows opening to nowhere. At the bottom left of the miniature there is a small building with an orange interior, which we can recognize as a *sebil* (public fountain) upon seeing the water cups that have been placed on its windowpanes.

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nu `maniyya, a biographical dictionary of Ottoman scholars by Tasköprülüzade Ahmed Efendi (Topkapi Museum, H. 1263). The manuscript was commissioned in 1619 by Grand Vizier Öküz Mehmed Pasha as a gift for the sultan, and the last scene shows the grand vizier presenting the book to the sultan in the presence of the artist. Apart from the *Divan-i Nadiri* he is known to have illustrated *Sâhnâme*, an account of Osman II's campaign against Poland in 1621 (Topkapi Museum, H. 1124), and at least three copies of the Turkish translation of the Persian epic, the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Firdawsi, two dated 1620 (Uppsala, U. Lib., MS. Celsing I, and New York, Public Library, Spencer collection Turkish MS. 1) and one dated *c.* 1622 (Paris, BN, MS. suppl. turc 326). Other paintings were incorporated into albums. See Atil (1978).

[186] The complex still exists in Istanbul in the present-day Fatih district and hosts the Museum of Caricature and Humor.

Figure 35. "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi," *Divan-i Nadiri*, Ahmed Nakşi, c.1620, Topkapi Museum, (H. 899, f. 22a), 18 x 20 cm.

The top of the miniature displays the walls and vaults of the Valans (or Bozdoğan in Turkish) aqueduct opening onto a green field. Through these apertures we see two figures. The one on the left is entering the picture plane while the one on the right is about to leave the scene. Both figures can be identified as women, the latter wears a red dress and a white headscarf while the former is dressed in a light brown costume with a matching red belt, head covering, and boots. She carries a big black bag.

At the bottom right, five figures stand by the entrance door of the complex. Following several scholars identify the man on horseback as Sultan Osman II, the ruler who commissioned the *Divan-i Nadiri* (Atil, 1978: 105; And, 2002: 99).[187] The two figures with conic headgears are his servants, while two of the other men (who each wear high-banded headgear of a light-brown color) accompanying the sultan can be recognized as imperial soldiers. As one of the sultan's servants carries a book under his arm, we can speculate that the sultan has come to visit the school in order to join Gazanfer Ağa's class.

Atil suggests that Ahmed Nakşi's style is "highly eclectic, revealing direct borrowings from classical and provincial Ottoman painting as well as elements chosen at random from Persian and European schools" (1978: 103). She adds that although he was working within the tradition of illustrated Ottoman manuscripts, he managed to create a distinct and characteristic style of representation, one that is immediately identifiable (103). In practically every miniature by Nakşi, the artist experiments with the local illusion of depth via architectural elements such as doors, windows, gates, and vaults. For instance, in his earliest work, *Tercüme-i Şekayık-ı Numaniye*, he places the figures "against interior settings with windows and doors opening to the background or within a landscape painting with the elements in the

[187] Semra Ögel (1993) identifies this figure as either a prince or a wealthy man. Bağci, Çağman, and Renda (2006) offer an entirely different reading of the miniature. They identify the figure on the horseback as Gazanfer Ağa. Moreover, they suggest that the instructor is Nadiri, the author of *Divan-i Nadiri*. However, I find And's and Atil's reading more plausible as the figure on the horseback "resembles" the other portraits of Osman II made by Nakşi, such as "Osman on Horseback," (ca. 1620, Topkapi Museum, H.2169, f.13r), "Sultan Osman II on Horseback" (ca. 1620, BL, Or. 2709, f 13.r), and "Sultan Osman II on Throne" (ca. 1620, IUL, T.9365, f. 9r.). Known as the "Young Osman," Sultan Osman II has a peculiar iconography in the Ottoman royal-portraiture tradition. He became sultan when he was fourteen years old and reigned only for four years before he was killed during a janissary uprising. Because of his young age, he has been depicted as a young boy without a beard, a trait that makes his depiction easily distinguishable from other sultans who, of course, unmistakably, cultivated beards or mustaches. For more on the Sultan Osman II portraits see Mahir (2000).

distance shown in perspective with diminishing proportions" (Atil, 1978: 104). According to Atil, Nakşi drew on the arts of the imperial workshop and of the West as his two main visual sources. He relies upon the Ottoman imperial miniature tradition "in representing the proper settings of the events and adheres to the established schemes of enthronement and battle scenes, and in the depiction of court activities" (1978: 109). Singular elements, such as "the peculiar perspective seen in architecture, the receding planes, diminishing elements in the background and an interest in representing Europeans" reveal the impact of another tradition, that of the West (109).[188]

Atil argues that Nakşi must have seen several albums in the Topkapi Palace containing a number of engravings made in Europe during the second half of the sixteenth century (1978: 109). They were "generally devoted to Biblical stories or the ages of man, they depict steps leading to archways, windows opening into the background and panoramic views extending to the distance" (109). The employment of depth via architectural elements in these engravings of Italian and Dutch origin might have influenced Nakşi's distinctive style. However, Nakşi does not employ a full perspectival configuration of the miniature plane of the sort observed in these engravings (Figure 36). Instead, in his rendering of these architectural openings, he retains partial depth almost as a motif.

[188] These engravings are collected in albums with numbers: H. 2135, H. 2148, and H. 2153 in the Topkapi Museum Collection.

Figure 36. "The Story of Daniel," artists unknown, Late sixteenth century, The Netherlands, Topkapi Museum, (H. 2148, f. 13 b). Reproduced from Atil (1978: 121).

Nevertheless, both Atil and Semra Ögel (1993) emphasize the impact of the European engravings on Nakşi's art and argue that not only was he exposed to the engravings, he also absorbed the logic of painting as a "window" as well as the discourse that accompanied such a conception. In Chapter 4, I discussed the ways in which the so-called Eastern and Western discourses concerning portraiture were incorporated into a distinctive Ottoman imperial visual idiom. In this chapter, I discuss whether the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting suggests an alternative visual epistemology to that which is promoted by the window metaphor, the conception that Ahmed Nakşi supposedly attempted to incorporate into his miniatures.

The Window Effect

In his treatise *De Pictura* (*On Painting*, 1435), Leon Battista Alberti described what one does when one paints as if looking through a window: "First of all, on the

surface on which I am going to paint, I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen […]" (1972: 55).[189] This sentence, and nothing more, marked the "debut" of the window metaphor, which centuries later informs the world's dominant computer operating system, namely, Microsoft Windows.[190] Obviously, Alberti's *De Pictura* is the first theoretical account of one-point perspective. I will not discuss here the technical details of the perspectival configuration of three-dimensional space on two-dimensional space, as has been done so often.[191] Rather, I would like to elaborate on the *function* of the window metaphor, which, once articulated by Alberti, came to frame our understanding of the subject's encounter with the visual. It has been used to explain not only our experience of the medium of painting but also of a variety of visual media.

In their groundbreaking book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that metaphors are not mere devices of poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish but are, more importantly, cognitive tools that affect our everyday ways of thinking, speaking, and acting. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two essentially unlike things. The essence of metaphor or metaphorical thinking is to understand and experience one kind of thing or experience in terms of another (1980b: 455). In her article "Scared to Death" (2006), Mieke Bal identifies three aspects of metaphors that relate them to theoretical concepts. She argues that the act of establishing similarities between two items is

[189] Among others, Gérard Wajcman argues that according to a strict reading of the Latin version of *On Painting*, Alberti compares painting to a window through which he sees not the world, as has often been stated, but a story (*istoria*) (2004: 53). His translation of the same sentence is: "First I draw on the surface to be painted a quadrilateral of the size I wish, made of right angles, which plays for me the role of an open window in which, outside, a story can be seen" (2004b: 60).

[190] New-media theorist Lev Manovich (1995) suggests that the "classical screen" of the tableau-window is still dominant and is the paradigm of the "windows interface" in computer display. He defines the classical screen as "a flat, rectangular surface. It is intended for frontal viewing (as opposed to, for instance, a panorama)." It exists in our normal space, "the space of our body, and acts as a window into another space. This other space, the space of representation, typically has a different scale from the scale of our normal space." Defined in this way, he argues, "a screen describes equally well a Renaissance painting [….] and a modern computer display. Even proportions have not changed in five centuries; they are similar for a typical fifteenth-century painting, a film screen, and a computer screen. (In this respect it is not accidental that the very names of the two main formats of computer displays point to two genres of painting: a horizontal format is referred to as 'landscape mode' while the vertical format is referred to as 'portrait mode')."

[191] For the configuration of perspectival painting, see Hubert Damisch (1994); Erwin Panosfky (1991), and Hanneke Grootenboer (2005).

meaningful because the new term illuminates something in the meaning of the first term—or, conversely, obscures something. However, the similarity need not reside in the meanings of the term itself but may be brought by the respective contexts of the two terms. The combination of similarity and difference "makes for the new, the creative, the informational surplus of metaphor" (158). It is this surplus of the metaphor that brings us something new about the object. Second, Bal contends that metaphors displace meanings and redirect them to something else—from the events to the subject, for example—and such dislocation gives them meaning in an implicit narrative. This sort of directing makes metaphor a "powerful heuristic tool" as it brings unseen and unforeseen aspects of the first term to the fore and produces "a contextual network for the object." Third, metaphors offer a second discourse within which the second term can be placed. She argues that the collusion of two discourses or two frames of reference, which can be called the framing aspect of metaphor, "is crucial for the fragile foundation of interdisciplinary scholarship constituted by nomadic concepts" (all on 158).

For Bal, this standard theory of metaphor characterizing the operation of concepts also becomes an epistemology, a way of knowing or analyzing those objects that we try to understand. However, this process is not so much meant to "predict, explain, or generalize," as, on the contrary, "to specify, analyze, get an eye for differences" (158). It "can yield intellectual gain when they raise new questions and suggest new perspectives," yet Bal warns us that it "can also entail loss when they [metaphors/concepts] are thematically closing and semantically vague" (159). I would add that once turned into clichés, metaphors can become restrictive, as they render their objects fixed and make their potential analyses ahistorical and uncritical.

According to Bal, referring to the mobility and displacement of meaning and knowledge like "traveling concepts," metaphors can be understood as akin to vehicles of transportation (Bal, 2002). As a transfer device, a conduit that moves meaning from one frame of reference to another, the *concept* of metaphor itself may "offer a discourse of translation between the traditions, debates, and objects of study of separate disciplinary domains" (Friedberg, 2006: 15). In this capacity, metaphors can become tools for critical analysis. They can help us translate objects from one disciplinary domain to another and can reveal what remains untranslatable.

The window metaphor, even though it was initially invoked to define the operation of Renaissance perspectival painting, is one such metaphor that offers a

discourse of translation in its travels among different media—cinema and photography, for example, as well as computer-based expression, interactive design, and digital art—and usually separate disciplinary domains. As such, it seems as if the trope still exerts its estimable illustrative power—and hence informs our experience of images in myriad and problematic ways.[192]

Wajcman's book *Fenêtre*: *Chroniques du regard et de l'intime* (2004) is one of the few works entirely devoted to the discussion of the window metaphor as it is materialized in what he calls the "tableau-window." In tracing the "logic" of the Albertian window trope, Wajcman argues that when Alberti formulated the rectangular tableau as a *finestra aperta*, the architectural rectangular window as we know it today had not yet existed. Rather, it became widespread only from about 1450 onwards (2004a: 74).[193] Therefore, Wajcman states, the Albertian tableau was like a window—but not the window of architecture, rather an ideal model. Consequently, Wajcman suggests that when Alberti formulated the analogy, he, in fact, did not proceed from a comparison between two existing, real objects. Instead he made the two comparable (56). The Albertian comparison, Wajcman contends, made us start looking at the window as at a tableau: it is not the tableau that is like a window but the window that has become similar to a tableau (60).

If we were to follow Wajcman's account, it is plausible to argue that by preparing the ground on which the metaphor could assert its effects, Alberti was putting forward two objects of knowledge. Yet, whether or not what Alberti meant by *finestra aperta* corresponds to what we now understand by the term "window," I argue that the operation of the architectural figure of the window should be understood as what Anne Friedberg has called an "epistemological metaphor" (2006:

[192] For the itinerary of the window trope—and its conceptual misuses—see Friedman (2005). The trope has recently been taken up by new-media theorists to delineate the operation of digital design and computer interface. For instance, *Windows and Mirrors: Interaction Design, Digital Art, and the Myth of Transparency* (2003) by Jay David Bolter and Diane Gromala argues for a permanent disparity between the metaphors "window" and "mirror"—corresponding to attributes of transparency as opposed to reflectivity—for defining the functioning of the computer interface. For the authors of the *Windows and Mirrors*, the mirror metaphor suggests that the encounter between the user and the interface involves an interactive act of "looking at" the medium in which the interface reflects the users and their contexts. The window metaphor, conversely, proposes a one-directional relation in which the viewer "looks through" the medium.

[193] Wajcman contends that the tableau was supposed to make something visible, whereas the Gothic windows of the time were not meant to be looked through: they were too highly placed or were darkened with lattices or less transparent glazing. Moreover, the tableau was framed and its frame—as is still the case—was turned toward the interior, whereas windows were not always framed and, when they were, their frames were carved on external walls.

26). An epistemological metaphor produces knowledge of its object and renders it knowable. In this sense, the window metaphor describes not so much the "nature" of the painting but the viewer's encounter with it, what she can see and know of it. As such, the window trope does not define what painting is. Rather, it describes the ways in which painting operates and relates to the viewer, and thus refers to the relation between the seeing subject and the object seen. It describes painting's *effect*.

Joseph Masheck opens his essay "Alberti's 'Window': Art-Historiographic Notes on an Antimodernist Misprision" (1991) by stating that "[c]lichés, like weeds, prove difficult to uproot" (35). The cliché he aims to dislocate is none other than the commonplace misuse of Alberti's evocation of the metaphor that equates the surface of painting with the transparent glass surface of the window. He suggests that "*De Pictura* 1.19 maintains [...] that if you draw a rectangle then you *may* treat it—the drawn rectangle that is, not the entire hypothetical surface—as an open window" (35). Similarly, Friedberg painstakingly argues that Alberti's metaphor of the window emphasized the frame of viewing rather than a natural or mimetic view enclosed by an architectural window (2006: 35): the "frame was what mattered, not the view out the window" (30).

The frame of the architectural window and the painting both bring forth an "ontological cut," to use Stoichita's terminology (1997: 30).[194] Both negate the wall and mark the boundaries of what is given-to-be-seen. A window separates the outside from the inside yet makes the two realms permeable by allowing light, wind, and the view to filter inside. The picture frame establishes, on the contrary, "the identity of the fiction" (Stoichita, 1997: 55). It points to representation at work. According to Louis Marin, the frame is "an ornament of the painting, but it is a necessary ornament: it is one of the conditions of *possibility* for contemplating the painting, for reading it, and thus interpreting it" (2001a: 323). Hence, the frame not only presents the painting as a "painting" but also makes it *lisible* (readable) as an object of contemplation and knowledge. In this sense, the frame brings the visual to the fore, or, as John Berger suggests, it deposits the visual in "a safe let into a wall" (1979:

[194] In *The Self-Aware Image*, Stoichita uses this term to refer to the separation of the portable panel painting from the wall. Relevant here is Jacques Derrida's (1987) discussion on the frame as *parergon* that functions as a kind of supplement to the work of which it is a part. According to Derrida, the frame is not a cut between the world and the work but a link between the two entities.

109).[195] It encloses what pertains to visual representation, and, ideally, it refutes the presence of forms of representation other than the figural. In relation to the viewer, the enclosed view of the window and the painting present themselves as clearly delimited objects standing out there, clearly separated from the self, and making themselves available for prospective scrutiny.

In addition to the discourse of the frame, the window metaphor brings forth another discourse, that of transparency. By invoking transparency, I distance myself from Masheck's and Friedberg's accounts. I argue with, for example, Stoichita, who has suggested that the window was a metaphor for dealing with perspective through which "[t]he image's painted surface functioned in the same way as the surface of a window, behind which the representation of a three-dimensional, homogenous, and logical space stretched far into the distance" (1997: 12). More importantly, the metaphor issues a discourse of transparency referring to a perceptual and conceptual cleanness and intelligibility concerning the relation between viewer and image. In this sense, it assumes an attitude of the viewer rather than a property of the object or the medium. The notion of transparency suggests that what is seen is at once comprehensible, hence it is knowable; the viewer's encounter with the tableau-window thus involves neither distortion nor interference. It does not acknowledge that the surface of the window (hence, the surface of the painting) can include streaks, reflections, refractions, or dust.

In its interlocking of the discourses of the frame and transparency, the window metaphor produces the knowledge of painting and casts the painting as a knowable and knowledgeable object. It promotes a viewing position, akin to that of looking though a window that strictly frames the seen within a transparent condition of knowing. However, in arguing in this fashion I do not wish to promote the viewing position identified by Jean Starobinski as "looking through the window." According to Starobinski, this position is an "archetypal situation," evident in itself, with neither a past nor a history. Indeed, it is beyond history, and as representing a point of eternal origin this viewing position conditions the performance of the viewer: its unreflected permanence suppresses the potentiality of other modes of visual encounter (1984, quoted in Wajcman, 2004a: 15). In contrast to such an

[195] Berger here refers to the possessability of a painting as an independent object. Here, I read his metaphor as positing that a painting encloses the visual and keeps it safe and "sound" within its frame.

ahistorical view, I align myself with Wajcman, who suggests a historically situated understanding of the operation of the tableau-window that, for him, paves the way for the "birth of the spectator." He writes:

> Previously the visible world was an address to the seeing man; it was entirely an invocation to decipher there the signs of the Creator and to give thanks for his creation. The world "gazed upon" him and called him, and reminded him that he had eyes not to see. Called by the visible, the subject was implicated in the visible. The idea of the window is, on the contrary, that of a seeing subject removed from what he sees. The visible no longer directed toward him and does not make a sign for him, doesn't send him a call. Through the window the visible becomes finally silent [….] To see without being seen and without being called to see: this is the spectator. (2004b: 63)

Wajcman argues here that the tableau-window renders the gaze of the Other invisible and by doing so creates the illusion that the viewer sees everything without being seen by the omnipotent gaze. In facing the tableau, the subject is taken away from the world, subtracted from the visual field as if she were looking out a window without the threat of being seen in return. For Wajcman, this scopic formula conditions the notion of subjectivity, that is, one's being intimate with oneself.[196] The one-way transparency (from inside to outside) suggested by the act of looking at a window is analogous to what is suggested when one looks at a painting: the subject can see without being seen by the gaze of the Other.

According to Wajcman, the tableau-window instigated a new subjectivity, that of the man who looks through his window, who has "the right to look upon the world [….] through the window, in secret, he can contemplate it" (2007). In this sense, the operation of the window metaphor not only delineates our encounter with painting but also, and more importantly, comes to demarcate our positioning within the visual field within which the seeing subject is converted into a spectator. However, the distancing of the seeing subject from what she sees does not proclaim a withdrawal from the visible world that is silenced –"a mute world, good to see" (Wajcman; 2004b: 63). Instead, seeing at a distance, in retreat, protected from what

[196] For the notion of the gaze and visual intimacy, see Chapter 2.

one sees to “satisfy one’s appetite to see” (63), asserts a drive to assume power over the visible as it is captured within the frame of the window/tableau as that which is there to be contemplated. As Bal argues, metaphors bring two discourses and two frames of reference into collision and produce a contextual network for the object. In this respect, it is through the amalgamation of the discourses of the frame and transparency that the window metaphor knits a contextual web around painting as its object: the painting as a framed object for contemplation is fused with the painting as a transparent object.

The Threshold

Certainly, a miniature painting cannot be compared to a window, as there are incommensurable formal dissimilarities between the two. To begin with, the window is an opening in the wall and consequently a form of separation from the outside world; the miniature painting, by contrast, is part of a book. As an element of the book *Divan-i Nadiri*, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature negates or, better, negotiates with the page and the space of the book that is made up of scripture as well as decorative patterns. Secondly, the size of the miniature (the dimensions of the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature are 18 x 20 cm) is too small to warrant comparison with a window that one can look through. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the size of the miniature is determined by the dimensions of the book, dimensions that correspond to the human hand; whereas the window is more commensurate with the form and dimensions of the human body as a whole. Finally, the miniature within the book lies horizontally in front of the viewer, whereas the window has its basis in the verticality of architecture, as I have already discussed. Accordingly, as I have argued in the previous chapter, the viewing position encouraged by the miniature is analogous to the bodily posture assumed when reading a book rather than the position taken when looking through a vertically oriented, transparent window.

However, these physical incommensurabilities do not lead to an inherent refusal of the discourse of the window metaphor. The engravings to which Nakşi was allegedly exposed share common material traits with the miniature. However, they retain the logic of the window and hence the discourses it knits around its object,

albeit in a condensed, engraved form (Figure 2).[197] In fact, if Nakşi borrowed anything from these engravings, it is not the logic of the window but rather the use of architectural embrasures. As I noted before, Atil proposes that, in his *oeuvre*, Ahmed Nakşi sought to combine "the traditional compositions of Ottoman painting of the 16th and early 17th [sic.] with conventions drawn from European prints, particularly perspective."[198] Atil presumes that as Nakşi has seen the "window," he has attempted to produce an illusion of depth by giving a back view of some of the figures in the foreground, incorporating other figures into the background, and introducing gates, windows and arches opening on to distant vistas.

Another miniature from the *Divan-i Nadiri* which depicts the house of *Sheykh ül-Islâm* Mustafa Efendi displays the use of such architectural openings (Figure 37). In this miniature, an assistant stands atop the steps and gathers petitions from the people assembled in the arcaded courtyard. Mustafa Efendi, depicted as considerably larger than the other figures, appears at a window on the second floor. He is busy with writing. Members of his household stand in front of other windows. An opening in the courtyard shows the street behind the house; two horses peer in through the window. A more peculiar view is presented through a window on the second floor, which gives onto a scene in which two figures converse in an alley. Instead of a window view, this miniature offers us a "windowed" space by mixing contesting spatial constructions through architectural embrasures.

Displaying numerous windows, door, and archways, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature exemplifies a similar functioning of the apertures. What interests me in Nakşi's work, however, is not his supposed attempts to master perspective within the traditionally flat miniature surface but rather his constant interrogation of architectural openings—a preoccupation that asserts itself in his work more than it does in the paintings of any other Ottoman miniaturist. While I tend to agree with Atil's suggestion that he used these openings to experiment with the illusion of depth, I contend that their rendering has little to do with the organization of the whole pictorial space (hence, perspective).

[197] For the relation between paintings and engravings, see Boer (2004: 109-138).

[198] For a similar argument on the role of perspective in the "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature, see Atasoy and Çağman (1974: 68-9).

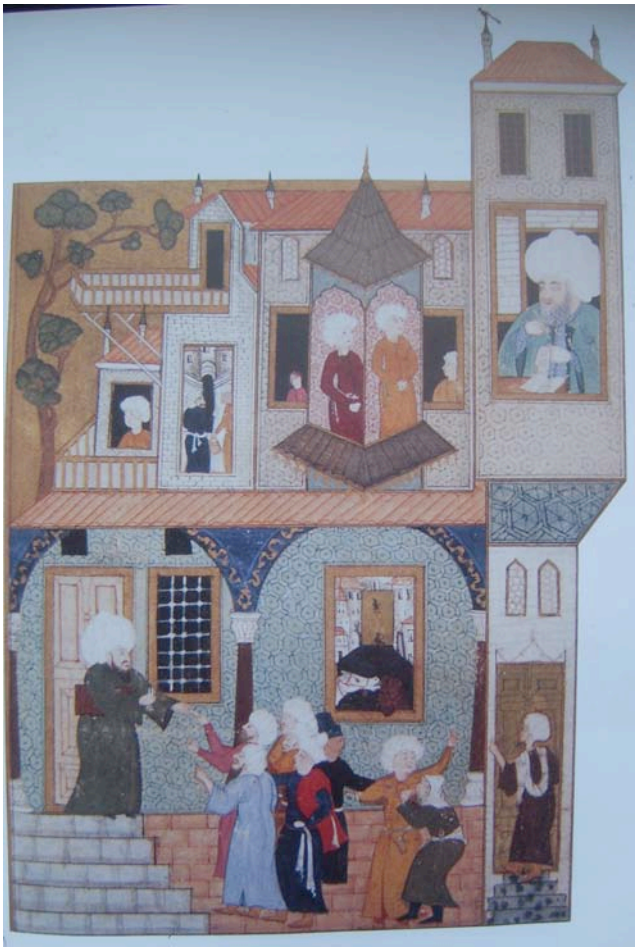

Figure 37. "The house of Sheykh ül-Islâm Mustafa Efendi," *Divan-i Nadiri*, Ahmed Nakşi, c.1620, Topkapi Museum, (H. 899, f. 18b). Reproduced from And (2002: 337).

I speculate that the employment of architectural thresholds in the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature indicates a subversion of their conventional function as architectural elements used for framing events and figures, as is the case, for example, in the *House of Sheykh ül-Islâm Mustafa Efendi* miniature.[199] Traditionally, doors and especially windows were utilized functionally to show a figure who usually has a secondary role in a given narrative. This function of such apertures can be compared to contemporaneous Dutch genre paintings. Georgina Cole suggests that the doorway in Dutch genre painting can also demarcate a site of liminal subjectivity within the image. In the work of Nicolaes Maes, for example, the liminal spaces of doorways

[199] See Victor Stoichita's *The Self-Aware Image* for a discussion of the meta-functioning of representation of doors, window, frames, and niches in early modern European painting.

are used to frame figures so as to keep them apart from narrative events as they unfold within the work (2006).[200]

However, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature does away with this sort of narrative framing function performed by architectural elements. For me, Nakşi's use of such openings should rather be conceived as an attempt to revise the conventional framing function by putting forth a novel treatment of such apertures as mere cavities that mostly lead the viewer's gaze nowhere. In this capacity, these potential openings do not operate visually so as to offer a view. Instead, they operate spatially so as to order the pictorial plane in a horizontal manner, as I will argue below. As opposed to visual apertures, these are "liminal" spaces, to use a term which has gained wide currency though its appearance and consideration in works by Edward Soja (1996) and Homi Bhabha (1994), among others. In her book *The Eye in the Text* (1981), which concentrates on textual figurings of passages, Mary Ann Caws relates the contemporary use of the term *threshold* to its initial use in anthropology:

> Whether or not the less used Greek sense of *limen* as refuge or harbor is added to the far more widespread Latin sense of *limen* as threshold, the present awareness of liminality and its applications is of far reach. This broad threshold includes at once the multiple notions of border, hinge, and articulation [….] of beginning and exit, of the place for crossing-over, and of the link between inside and out. Any serious mention of liminality has to take into account the anthropological notions of passage and its rites […]. (15)

Most notably the anthropologist Victor Turner (1969), who explored Arnold van Gennep's threefold structure of rites of passage (that could be social, sexual, spiritual, or spatial) describes the liminal as a period of transition in which the subject, having relinquished an old identity without yet assuming a new one, becomes no one and finds herself to be nowhere. He describes such passages as occupying a "no-man's-land betwixt-and-between," a site of "a fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities [….] a striving after new forms and structures, a gestation process" (Turner 1986: 41).

[200]The "eavesdropper" is the primary example of a figure functioning equally as protagonist and beholder, spectacle and spectator—and who occupies a space both within and without the pictorial narrative. See also Jenny Anger (2004), especially the conclusion.

Inspired by Turner's metaphorical investment of the notion of the threshold, I suggest that Nakşi's multiple embrasures are indeed a storehouse of possibilities for the viewer to discern new visual forms and structures and to initiate a conception process, which might be called a "threshold experience." However, I do not argue that the metaphor of the threshold should be conceived as an antidote to the pervasive figure of the window. Instead, I would like to propose that the term *threshold* might help us better understand the operation of miniature painting and illustrate, at the same time, what the window trope lacks and conceals.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term *threshold* as "the piece of timber or stone which lies below the bottom of a door, and has to be crossed in entering a house; the sill of a doorway; hence, the entrance to a house or building." It is fundamentally related to architecture and, like the window, has a bordering function. Yet, it relates less to the visual than does the window, as it refers to a space for movement from one separate space to another. It is more of a tunnel or passage than a transparent surface. As such, it has more spatial and temporal connotations. Moreover, as the threshold is a space between two realms, it is itself a space in between, belonging to neither of them. It marks a passage and an intersection. In relation to sight, the threshold might bring forth opacity instead of transparency as it can delay the process of seeing.

According to the same dictionary, figurative definitions of the threshold include "entrance, the beginning of a state or action, outset, opening." In this capacity, the threshold offers us a place for our quest to find an alternative state of painting that has been crowded out by the dominance of the tableau-window. Finally, in physiology, the term *threshold* refers to the "limit below which a stimulus is not perceptible; the magnitude or intensity of a stimulus which has to be exceeded for it to produce a certain response." In this sense, the threshold metaphor allows us to consider what the viewer cannot see in painting, or, to put it a different way, what the viewer leaves unseen. Keeping these definitions in mind, my analysis of the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature will confront the threshold to the window by focusing two discourses brought to the fore latter: the function of the *frame* and the notion of *transparency*.

The Frame as a Threshold

Stoichita argues that the frame "separates the image from anything that is nonimage" (1997: 30). It defines "what is framed as a meaningful world as opposed to the outside-the-frame, which is simply the world experienced" (30). While the frame of the tableau severs it from the wall and, hence, the surrounding world, the miniature resides within the space of the book as an object of the world that is experienced. However, the miniature is not strictly a part of the scriptural space of the book; its spatial partition is maintained by means of the visibly drawn gilded frame that surrounds the miniature on four sides.[201] This frame, even though it has no material or formal difference (line and color) from the image itself, serves to mark the limits of the miniature by detaching it from the textual space of the manuscript, which actually continues on to the next page.[202] The frame also separates the miniature from the space immediate outside it, which is traditionally reserved for (mostly floral) ornamentation.[203]

The frame of the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature, however, sets its borders between the image and the blankness of the page. This visible separation, in turn, acknowledges the presence of the material supporting surface: the page of the book. While the window metaphor necessarily denies or annihilates the material support "because it is assumed to be empty by an essential *aperité*, a surface window that will soon come open" the miniature highlights the support/surface (Marin, 2001b: 378).[204] In this capacity, I argue that, instead of operating as an "ontological cut," the

[201] In some reproductions, for example in Metin And (2003: 336), the gilded frame of the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature has been discarded. This "cropping attitude" amounts to a certain conceptualization of painting that defines the work as that which is reserved within the frame. The frame is conceived as detachable even when it is physically impossible to remove it, as in the case of the miniature painting. As Barbara Savedoff suggests, this is the case in many reproductions: they provide us with an "ideal" view of the work—unobstructed, well lit, and presented to us at eye level—usually isolated from their material and contextual settings. They show what is presumed to be "the painting itself"—the painted portion of the canvas up to the border of the frame (1999: 346).

[202] The script on the next page actually continues within the miniature, within the text boxes placed on the top and the bottom of the picture plane.

[203] The *Woman bathing in the Hamam* (Chapter 2), the Fall (Chapter 1), and the portrait of the Sultan Ahmed III (Chapter 4) miniatures are surrounded by moderate floral ornamentation; whereas the immediate exteriors of the circumcision march miniature series (Chapter 3) and the Timur miniature (Chapter 5) are left blank.

[204] See also Norman Bryson's *Vision and Painting* (1983), in which he discusses the material logic of Western oil painting through what he calls the "erasive imperative." This imperative first erases the material support through the thickness of paint as well as brushstrokes—hence the implication of

miniature frame embarks upon a threshold function by mediating between the textual, the figural, the ornamental, and the emptiness that is supposedly exterior to the miniature. Unlike the tableau-window, the miniature comes into essence by means of an intimate interplay with its outside and also among different modes of representation. The frame mediates and permeates this interaction by serving as a threshold.

In the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature, this threshold modality of the frame is made tangible by means of two pictorial details that linger on the threshold/frame. The hardly ignorable first detail shows the gilded finial (*alem*) of the *medrese* dome that sticks eye-catchingly out of the frame. It is drawn over and extends beyond the frame. Similarly, the less visible headgear of Sultan Osman II is painted on the frame at the lower right of the miniature. These two instances, I suggest, problematize the "normative" status and the function of the frame by questioning what it incorporates and encircles, hence what it can make known/seen. They illustrate the moments when the figural, secured by the frame, slips into its alleged outside. The frame does not serve to contain the internal operation of figuration. Instead, it allows the figurative to expand beyond the boundaries of the image into the void, into the unmapped territory of the empty page. In this sense, the protruding finial can be compared to the fortress located outside of the frame of the Timur miniature, discussed in the preceding chapter. As I argued there, the broken right-hand-side frame of the Timur miniature discards the separation between inside and outside and thereby appropriates the surrounding void. In this capacity, the fortress (and also the obtruding hills and cascading river) extends the picture plane beyond its alleged borders and exploits the whole page in its "interior."

In the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature, conversely, the difference between inside and outside is first sustained as a dialectical relation—by the regulating frame—that is subsequently questioned by the pictorial elements, which are literally hanging on the threshold. The headgear of the sultan is neither inside nor outside, belonging to neither realm but rather to the liminal zone between them. This tension is carried further, as the finial transgresses the frame as if to test the limits of the dialectic. This transgression yields to continuity between the two realms, as the finial touches both.

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artist's body—leaving the picture plane materially opaque. This material opacity is the condition of metaphorical transparency (88-89).

As such, the frame is not a device of separation but is rather a line of transition, a mediating threshold.

The finial is a highly ambiguous figure—a "theoretical apex" that strikes us with its ambivalent presence. It reminds the viewer specifically of the mediation of the frame and the intermedial state of the miniature itself. While it touches the empty space conventionally reserved for the ornamental and the textual, it facilitates, at the same time, the contamination of the field of the "pure visual" caused within the frame by the presence of "alien" representational systems. Take, for example, the text-boxes within the miniature that keep the handwritten text at bay by enclosing it in a separate space.[205] "Windowed" within their own "scriptural conceptual aesthetic space" (Gonzalez, 2001: 103), the calligraphic texts are strictly isolated from the figurative. Yet they are not liberated from each other. They act as complementary cognitive means for those who read Ottoman (Arabic) script. But for those who cannot (or do not) read the text, the formal aesthetic qualities of the handwritten text reveal themselves more openly in relation to the "rest" of the miniature. Even though the scriptural space is inserted in the margins of the picture plane, I argue that it remains neither visually nor semantically subordinated to the figural, as has been traditionally argued. In "The Signifying Aesthetic System of Inscription in Islamic Art," Valérie Gonzales suggests that when "Muslim painters dared to venture into the marvelous world of three-dimensional illusion," there occurred a clash between the two-dimensional space of calligraphy and the illusionistic figurative one (Gonzalez, 2001: 109). In such cases, Gonzalez argues,

> Without successfully severing its links with calligraphy, the iconography shares with it the entire pictorial plane of the page, in such a way that inscriptions serve only a marginalized function, namely an informative function that only aims to provide semantic terms for the understanding of the miniature. In this case, the scriptures appear circumscribed inside cartouches,

[205] The text on the miniature reads: "Gubâr-i tevsen-i iclâli surme-i a'yân" (upper section) and "Cenâb-i dergeh-i ikbâli kible-i ahyâr" (lower section). This couplet can loosely be translated as "The dust of his horse (which is the symbol of his) omnipotence is the kohl of the eyes of notable men / the courtyard of the *dergah* [a sufi center for teaching, literally meaning the threshold] which is [the symbol] of bliss and prosperity is the *kible* [the direction of Mecca] of the auspicious people." Below, I will elaborate on the use of the notion of *dergah* (the threshold). I am grateful to Hatice Aynur from Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, for the transcription of the Ottoman (Arabic) text into Turkish.

> panels or as friezes set back from the image, alongside its edges. The terms of the message emanating from these texts do not modify the aesthetic vision that the picture itself proposes. (109)

A similar configuration relating the two signifying systems is at stake in the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature.

Yet the inscriptions do not function to merely impart information; they also participate in the aesthetics of the miniature by invoking a threshold experience. The viewer's gaze has to travel between these two planes. Because the inner frame emphasizes the difference between the two realms, the passage from one plane to the other does not occur subtly. The textual contamination of the figural turns the whole plane into a kind of intermediary space that sustains the difference between the two. The textual also connects the pictorial plane to its outside, to the next page inhibited by the textual itself. The scripts in the text-boxes function as "hyperlinks" (to borrow a contemporary term from the vocabulary of the Internet), which transport the viewer to the textual outside of the miniature located, on the right-hand page**.**

The interplay between the textual and the figurative is further complicated by means of the script above the entrance door of the *külliye*, which reminds the ignorant (though not illeterate) viewer that *this* is, indeed, the *Medrese* of Gazanfer Ağa. It is not a "representation" of a text on the building, but is the text itself. It was probably put there by the scribe who executed the whole manuscript. Here, the strict separation suggested by the text-boxes is replaced by a smooth transition between the two realms within the figure of the door. As an architectural element, the door demarcates and delimits, but also allows the conjoining of different spaces that form "permeable boundaries between heterogeneous zones of experience" (Cole, 2006). The door of the *külliye* carries this threshold function to the level of metaphor as that which mediates between the scriptural and the visual. Seen together with its blue ornamented frame, the door brings the ornamental into play and thereby highlights the pictorial plane as a liminal space opening toward the textual, ornamental, and figurative.[206] As such, the door of the complex is an allegorical figure in *mise-en-abyme* for the operation of the miniature itself as well as for the book, as it incorporates different modalities into its surface.

[206] See Chapter 4 for the role of the ornamentation in miniature painting.

Until now, I have discussed the first metaphorical effect of the threshold notion in respect to the functioning of the frame. The frame understood as a threshold renders the pictorial plane as a transitional passage between inside and outside as well as between different logics of representation and modalities of seeing. Destabilized here is the status of the frame as "an indispensable *parergon*, a constitutive supplement" (Marin, 2001a; Derrida, 1997) that "autonomizes the work within visible space" by putting "representation into a state of exclusive presence" (Marin, 2001a: 356). What the frame of the tableau-window makes tangible is the revelation that outside the space it encircles, "there is nothing to contemplate" (Marin, 2001a: 356). The miniature frame, however, allows permeation between outside and inside. Its virtue is, then, not simply in its offering of the painting for viewing as an object of contemplation, as Marin would have it. On the contrary, it encourages the viewer to be caught in-between practices and frames of knowing the world and modes of communication at the threshold. She is invited to dwell at this threshold between alternative states of knowing and experiencing: looking, reading, and sensing. In this capacity, the frame facilitates a liminal zone of a fructile chaos, a storehouse of possibilities leading the viewer to experience a state of productive distraction and intermedial confusion rather than one of attentive contemplation.

Thresholding the Visual

I mentioned that the window metaphor entails that the meeting of viewer with the medium is a transparent encounter, one that involves no visual distractions such as streaks, reflections, refractions, and dust. The miniature, on the other hand, highlights the opacity of the medium as well as the spatial and temporal aspects that are involved in the acts of looking, which accentuate the potentiality of what Marin calls the "ruptures," "interruptions," or "syncopes" entailed by the encounter (2001b).[207] I will argue that the architectural embrasures in the "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature not only organize the representational space in a horizontal manner but also operate as interruptions that gates or thresholds the viewer's gaze.

[207] In his essay titled "Ruptures, Interruptions or Syncopes in Representation in Painting" (2001b), Marin focuses on the blanks of representation in painting, or "opacifications"—ways of making "white" or "blank" spaces in painting.

The most visible rupture of this kind can be observed in the spatial organization of the miniature plane. Semra Ögel states that the "Gazanfer Ağa Medresesi" miniature brings together two distinct forms of pictorial space: the perspectival in the upper plane and the traditional two-dimensional multiple point of view of the Ottoman miniature painting in the rest (1993: 371). These two modes of spatial representation are appended to each other without intermingling. This spatial separation within the miniature plane creates the illusion that there is, indeed, a "foreground" of the miniature—the school, school cells, the *sebil*, the front walls, and the gate in front of which the sultan waits—as well as a "background" comprising the aqueduct wall and vaults.

It is plausible to argue that the foreground enjoys what Deepak Ananth calls "the aesthetic of the carpet," as mentioned in Chapter 4 in the discussion of the portrait of the sultan. Such an aesthetic denies "any hierarchy in the treatment of space as exemplified by the easy reciprocity and mobility between indoors and outdoors, background and foreground, center and margin—those paradigmatic spatial components of Western painting that the Islamic miniature audaciously recasts as the discrete yet interlinked elements of an all-encompassing surface design" (1996, 157). The local illusion of depth suggested by the two aqueduct vaults partially brings in those paradigmatic spatial components in an otherwise flat miniature plane and gives order to the visible within the miniature. However, this order, I argue, is different from the perspectival organization that would have rendered the picture plane harmoniously transparent. Rather, it participates in the horizontal layering or "thresholding" of the visible as central to a visual order that contaminates the experience of the viewer with opacity.

The thresholding of the visual through horizontal layers can be traced through the viewer's entering of the miniature following the "intruder," namely, the figure of the sultan, who seems to have come into the picture just in time to leave his headgear on the frame. The sultan and his company are headed toward the door of the complex and lead the viewer's gaze into the interior of the school. Hence the sultan—and his escorts—not only invite the viewer into the picture plane but also introduce her to the "subject matter" of the miniature: the theological school of Gazanfer Ağa. The sultan might then be called a "figure of the frame," a rhetorical personage who, according to Marin, is aligned with the boundaries of the work and can draw the viewer's gaze to the events unfolding within the painting (2001a: 358-360).

In narrative terms, the figure of the sultan is a focalizer whose point of view the viewer adopts through a process of identification, and hence perceives the narrative.[208] We enter the story by subsuming his vision, yet his "gated gaze" does not take the viewer too far. There seems to be no passage into the school's interior. The grilled window on the walls of the complex opens to a garden view, yet it leaves the viewer with a cropped view of the pavement and grass. Hence the viewer is held at the door, the "focalized object" of the sultan's vision. The viewer, just like the sultan himself, is prevented from interrupting the intimacy of the interior, partitioned by the door into private and public spheres. Yet, as Bachelard suggests, "the door is both an entrance and exit; it keeps in, protects, secures, but also lets pass, invites and tempts (1994: 222). In this sense, the closed door functions as the first threshold that not only prevents vision but also enables it by invoking a desire for sight. In line with the previous reading of the door as a threshold between different modalities of seeing, here the door functions as a wavering, liminal space between inside and outside as well as between vision and its closure.[209] This threshold experience responds, as it were, to Bachelard's observation of "[h]ow concrete everything becomes in the world of the spirit when an object, a mere door, can give us images of hesitation, temptation, desire, security, welcome and respect" (1994: 224). Torn between hesitation and temptation—just like the viewer—the sultan as the focalizer and the door as the focalized object help us see, in Bal's words, "not what is represented, but how it is represented—what view of the scene is proposed to us" (1991: 211).

Unlike the sultan, the viewer can make a transgressive crossing past the closed door so as to catch a glimpse of the school's interior, thanks to the canceling out of the façade of the building, a common technique used to show interiors in miniature painting. In fact, the lower text on the miniature defines the school as a *dergâh* ("the courtyard of the *dergâh* which is [the symbol] of bliss and prosperity is

[208] For the concept of focalization, see Bal (1997). The *fabula* (a temporally and logically connected sequence of events) comes across as a story by means of the semanticization of characters, the concretization of space in place, the thickening of a sense of time, and above all, through focalization. The term indicates the connection between the events that make up the *fabula* and the one or more subjects whose "perspective" or "point of view" on the events is represented in the narrative. For the visual status of the narrative focalizer, see Bal (1991), especially Chapter 4.

[209] For the discussion of dialectics of inside and outside in literature, with a strong emphasis on the visual, see Bachelard (1994).

the *kible* [the direction of Mecca] of the auspicious people"). *Dergâh* is a center for teaching the Sufi tradition. Literally it means "threshold," referring to the passage to the Infinite, the Divine.[210] As such, the *dergâh* is a mediating space between the divine and the material world. The elimination of the "fourth wall" of this sacred threshold permits the viewer to see what otherwise would have remained invisible and intimate. Stoichita argues that

> All representations of interiors envision the room with the fourth wall eliminated. The missing partition—an essential element in all intimist fiction—is replaced by the surface of the pictorial image. To study this substitution is, in a way, to make (remake) the history of European painting. (1997: 44)

This easy, yet problematic, exchangeability makes the work of the plane of representation invisible and renders it "entirely transparent" (Marin, 2001a: 354). The history of Ottoman miniature painting is, however, different. The miniature, although it eliminates the fourth wall in its representations of interiors, acknowledges this abolition so as to reflect on the exclusion itself. [211] Instead of juxtaposing the fourth wall with the surface of the pictorial image, to create for the viewer the illusion that she is gazing into an interior through a window, the "Gazanfer Ağa" miniature stages its exclusion. In this specific miniature, as well as in many others, the missing partition referred to by Stoichita is replaced or made tangible by means of the closed door, which suggests opacity rather than a transparent vision. The discarded fourth wall thresholds the viewer *in absentia*; it promises its beholder a view of the "sacred" only by reminding her of its exclusion. In this sense, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature is a self-aware image, to borrow Stoichita's book title,

[210] Similarly, other terms such as *dervish* and *muraqabah* (Sufi mediation) mean "threshold" or "doorway."

[211] Here I find the role of the *medrese* dome quite important with respect to the relation between the interior and exterior of the building. In his article "The Problem of Space in the Ottoman Mosque" (1963), David Gebhard argues that Ottoman mosques—along with other religious edifices that imitate the form of the mosque—sought to mirror the volumetric enclosure of space. The domes, which enclose the space and form the structure of the building, were consistently and logically declared on the exterior of the building, establishing a close expressive correspondence between exterior and interior. He contends that with little effort one may read the structure and the plan of the volumetric space by examining these dome structures. As such, the dome is an element that reveals the structure of interior toward outside.

commenting on itself and in particular on its representational operation of the separation of inside from outside.

Dwelling at the threshold of the *dergâh*, the viewer witnesses an intimate and almost sacred space of a classroom at a standstill. The silent and rigid atmosphere is broken by one figure in the row of *ulema*s, who turns towards his colleague to whisper something in his ear—perhaps word of the arrival of the sultan. This figure is yet another internal focalizer, who, by turning toward the door, carries the viewer's gaze back outside toward the sultan. Thus a circular "line of sight" is created in response to the gated vision of the sultan.[212] As the rest of the figures in the classroom seem to be entirely absorbed in their activities, the viewer's look is captured within this circular sight, caught between inside and outside.

The two windows on the decorated walls of the *medrese*, toward which all the figures have turned their backs, offer the viewer another direction for sight that is different than the enclosed circular gazing. At first glance, the windows seem to reveal an arbitrarily cropped view of a lawn with a tree and a giant plant with flowers. However, what we are given to see is hardly a "view from a window" but is instead a flat surface giving the impression of being a picture within a picture, hardly distinguishable from the floral wall ornamentation. Rather than display the pavement behind the school—which would be the expected view—they disengage the interior of the school from the world outside by not being permeable to sight, as windows are supposed to be. In this capacity, these openings can be *revzens* (upper windows) or *içlik*, those stained glass panes that are inserted inside the interior faces of windows (Bakirer, 2001: 3). These sorts of windows are made to mediate light through their intricate stucco grills and glass insets—but they do not permit a view. The construction of the *revzen* windows in the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature resembles the eighteenth-century examples that "became more unified with interior decoration" and employed grills that were an "almost inseparable part of the stucco ornaments with garlands, twining scrolls and blooming flowers that covered the wall surfaces" (Bakirer, 2001: 6). In this capacity, the windows of the school do not open to the outside but are opaque surfaces contingent to the interior. They are liminal openings,

[212] Bal suggests that paintings propose spectator positions, "lines of sight," that can be read into the image. They do not, however, in any way guarantee that the actual viewer looks along these lines, but only represent aspects of the image. (1991: 121). See Chapter 3 for a short discussion of the "line of sight" that produces a sense of continuity within a miniature series.

which do not give a view. Instead they mediate between separate spaces and "threshold" the viewer's gaze.

The archways of the aqueduct, on the other hand, contrast with the opacity of the interior windows in bringing forth a limited transparency. Through the foreshortened vaults of the aqueduct we catch a glimpse of a green, meadow-like field. The illusion of depth promises the viewer that this field extends well beyond the surface of the miniature. As I have suggested, the different spatial order of the upper picture plane clearly separates it from the flat foreground scene. This internal partition within the miniature plane is operational on two interconnected levels. First, it relates to the semantics of the miniature and, second, on a theoretical level, it comments on the notion of the threshold as the "limit below which a stimulus is not perceptible; the magnitude or intensity of a stimulus which has to be exceeded for it to produce a certain response" (*OED*).

On the level of meaning production, the separation between two realms functions as an invisible threshold between the public and the private, or better yet, between the world of the learned and that of common people (or, alternatively, between the sacred space of the *dergâh* and the mundane realm of street life). This is made clearly apparent by the impermeable windows of the school, which detach the interior from the street. Moreover, compared to the richly decorated and minutely represented foreground—the interior of the school and its entrance gate, a space that includes the sultan and his company—the background is plainly depicted. In this sense, it is plausible to argue that the world of the learned is depicted as self-enclosed and indifferent to the blunt and blank everyday (dis)order.

This demarcation between the two worlds can have an additional function once we recognize the two figures walking under the vaults, because of their dresses and headscarves, to be women. In Chapter 2, I mentioned the gendered gap when we inquire into works dealing with Ottoman history, one of the major fields in which figural illustration played an important role. As Gülru Necipoğlu states, "official Ottoman historians mostly avoided the subject of women," as "the central figure of their narratives was always the sultan" (1991: 159). However, by the mid-seventeenth century, the female figure becomes a subject in it own right in the miniatures representing scenes of everyday life. The *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature brings together in one image two worlds—the male imperial and administrative realm and the feminized arena of daily life—while simultaneously acknowledging their

separateness. In this capacity, the division between spaces works as an invisible gender line, keeping the women out of the learned men's world and subordinating them to the plain world of the everyday.[213] Yet this pictorial assignment works against the stereotypical secluded, submissive, and domestic image of the Ottoman woman—who is often supposed to belong to the fantastic world of the *harem*—by replacing her with a wanderer figure who comes in (the miniature) and leaves (the miniature) according to her own will.

The allocation of these women to the "public space," to use the term anachronistically, turns these two figures into de Certeauian pedestrians who by their act of walking transform the "place" into a lived "space."[214] De Certeau contends that the walker constitutes—by means of pedestrian speech acts—both a near and a far in relation to "his" position (1984: 99). Indeed, these two figures operate in a constructed three-dimensional space and through their presence mark it as their *space*, indifferent and inaccessible to the world of (learned) men. The difference between the two modes of spatial representation thus operates as an invisible threshold in which the two worlds touch each other without merging.

Moreover, the archways that frame the women can be read as the thresholds of the city—they open out onto an unmarked green territory—as well as of the miniature. This threshold function is close to Walter Benjamin's employment of the German notion *Schwelle* in his unfinished *Das Passagen-Werk.*[215] *Schwelle* can be

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[213] I would like to thank one of the participants in the International ASCA Workshop entitled "Inside Knowledge (Un)doing Methodologies, Imagining Alternatives" (2007), whose name I unfortunately cannot recall, for bringing the gender aspect to my attention following my presentation during the session "Creating Objects, Developing Methodologies."

[214]De Certeau's definition of place is akin to calculated, geometrical, perspectival space: "The law of the 'proper' rules in the place; the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another, each situated in its own 'proper' and distinct location, a location it defines" (1984: 117). In contrast, *space is a practiced place* that "exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables [. . . .] Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities [. . . .] In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a 'proper'" (117).

[215] No doubt, Benjamin uses the notion of *Schwelle* to refer to nineteenth-century Paris. However, his rendering of the topography of Paris to make it legible as a text allows me to expand his notion to the visual field. Benjamin also evokes this notion in relation to prostitutes. However, in my reading I do not wish to put forth such a connection. My reading of the archways as Benjaminian thresholds is strongly influenced by Feride Çiçekoğlu (2007), who concentrates on the representation of women wanderers, strollers, and prostitutes in Turkish cinema. Çiçekoğlu also draws on the notion of the threshold in her analyses, which have also inspired my reading of the invisible gender line in the miniature.

translated into English as “threshold” without doing justice to what Benjamin means by the term. He explains the significance of the term by elucidating its meaning, referring to the German verb *schwellen* cognate with the English “to swell,” and contends that “[t]he threshold must be carefully distinguished from the boundary. A *Schwelle* <threshold> is a zone. Transformation, passage, wave action are in the word *schwellen*, swell, and etymology ought not to overlook these senses” (1999: 494). Samuel Weber notes that a threshold is a zone of transition, change, and movement where the edges of a place are inflated such that inside and outside spaces overlap and the separation between the two breaks down (2003: 23). My use of the notion of the threshold in relation to the archways comes close to the Benjaminian *Schwelle* as that which entails the breakdown of a clear-cut opposition between inside and outside. Swelling, on the other hand, as Weber notes, indicates a crisis in the function of containment. The container, he suggests, “no longer serves as a fixed place to define movement as change of place but instead is itself caught up in a movement, a tension, becomes over-extended” (2003: 23). Therefore, the threshold is not a mere space of transition or interval situated between two fixed points or places, but is a “zone of indefinite expansion and inflation” (26).

In their tension with the foreground, in their expansion toward a territory that the viewer is not asked to see, the two vaults are Benjaminian thresholds. This unseen territory presents a crisis of containment of the miniature plane, as it inflates toward that which cannot be visualized within it. The two figures—one who has already been there, the other facing it—are offered this unspecified and uncertain territory, whereas we are given a glimpse that is just sufficient enough to invoke the desire to see and conquer. The viewer can follow the “woman in red” who is about to step out of sight, yet this figure will not lead her anywhere. We will end up “back in the miniature,” too, if we follow the other figure with the red headscarf. In either case, the viewer is stuck within the miniature, between multiple thresholds.

I argue that this gated order of looking, constructed via architectural openings—the door, the windows and the archways—allows the viewer to travel within the miniature through numerous opaque thresholds. Such an ordering of the miniature can be related to the general ordering of the visible or what the scholar of Ottoman architecture and art Gülru Necipoğlu calls “framing the gaze.” As I discussed in Chapter 4, in “Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces,” (1993) Necipoğlu concentrates on the differences among visual economies

of the three dynasties manifested in the construction of imperial architecture. I suggested that the portrait of Sultan Ahmed III affirms the incompatible invisibility and overemphasized power of gazing of the Ottoman sultan by replicating the function of the grilled windows of the Topkapi Seraglio.

According to Necipoğlu, the structure of the seraglio granted the sultan the omnipotent power of gazing over others and, at the same time, rendered him invisible. Those who had the privilege of entering the imperial building (such as Ottoman dignitaries, local notables, and foreign ambassadors) had to pass through gates that connected and separated different secluded courts. These passages regulated the visual economy of the seraglio.[216] Necipoğlu states:

> Its [Topkapi's] three increasingly secluded courts were experienced in a processional sequence that drew the official visitor from one clearly marked ceremonial station to the next. Three monumental gates occupying the central position at the head of each court funneled the ceremonial procession toward the sultan's private reception hall attached to the inner threshold of the third gate where all movement converged. The first two outer courts housed various workshops, service areas, and administrative functions, mere extensions of a much more magnificent inner palace constituting the sultan's inaccessible private domain. The innermost third court, divided into male and female zones [was] fronted by a walled hanging garden with kiosks […]. (303)

These three gates designated the order of the visual by controlling who could and could not be seen and who was allowed to see what, thereby defining the limits of the visible. The *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature employs a similar thresholding in which the viewer reads the miniature by means of passing multiple thresholds that are guarded by obstructing opaque figures instead of Janus-headed janissaries. However, the miniature reverses the order of the visual that is at stake in the Topkapi. While the palace structure kept the sultan visible only as a silhouette, as I argued in Chapter 4, the miniature here depicts him almost as a fleeting detail on the corner of the picture

[216] Except for the two religious holidays in which the sultan agreed to give public audiences, he would remain in seclusion and only receive privileged dignitaries and ambassadors in his private audience hall four times a week.

plane. He is marginalized to the extent that the viewer might pass him by without recognizing that she is looking at the sultan. With this visual reversal, the miniature makes the sultan an object of contemplation by taking him out of the confines of the palace where he was "hidden like a pearl 'in the depth of the oyster shell'" (Necipoğlu, 1993: 304). What is made invisible, on the contrary, is the order of the city of his vassals, to which he remains oblivious.

Finally, this last threshold of the vaults that swells toward unknown territories provides the notion of the threshold its ultimate metaphorical significance as the "limit below which a stimulus is not perceptible; the magnitude or intensity of a stimulus which has to be exceeded for it to produce a certain response" (*OED*). Either it resides at the edge of the miniature opening or it swells toward its outside: to the emptiness of the page, thereby setting the limit of the perceptible, and hence representable and knowable within the miniature. On the one hand, it asserts the limits of the omnipotent gaze of its intended viewer—the sultan—by thresholding his vision for the third time. The everyday realm of the city that has been given to the two "*flâneuse*" figures is kept out of the reach of the sultan's gazing power; he can see neither where they come from nor where they are headed. On the other hand, it challenges the informed gaze that we possess as the "uninvited" beholders, as those who want to take hold of the miniature. What we can see through the vaults is a flat-as-paper lawn that, while not feeding the "good eye" of the art historian, provides food for thought for the cultural analyst.[217] It asks for a "curious eye," as Irit Rogoff calls it, implying a certain "unsettled act of looking oriented towards the outside of the realm of the known, towards the things not yet quite understood or articulated, towards the pleasures of the forbidden or the hidden or the unthought with the optimism of finding out something one had not known or been able to conceive of before" (1998:18).

The pleasure that the miniature promises to its curious viewer is, I propose, the joy of "opacity" and the bliss of not being able to see/know a "secret" that is given only to the female figures of the miniature—and, additionally, is kept away from the viewer who has to assume, and identify with the viewing position of the

[217] Rogoff writes: "When I was training as an art historian, we were instructed in staring at pictures. The assumption was that the harder we look, the more would be revealed to us; that a rigorous, precise and historically informed looking would reveal a wealth of hidden meanings. This belief produced a new anatomical formation called 'the good eye' […]" (1996: 17).

sultan. This is the threshold of the invisible and unknowable that the window metaphor is keen on framing and making visible. Dwelling at the threshold involves taking the "risks of fiction," as Didi-Huberman contends. It consists of not-grasping the image, of letting oneself be grasped by it, and thus of "letting go of one's knowledge about it" (Didi-Huberman, 2005: 16). It definitely requires letting go of metaphors we think we see through clearly.

Dwelling at the Threshold

Whether Ahmet Nakşi indeed tried to incorporate the logic of the painting as a window in his miniature or not, the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature negotiates with the discourse of transparency and the rhetoric of the frame, as I discussed above. The metaphor/concept of the threshold, as it pertains to a theory of the miniature, sheds light on the in-between spaces neglected and negated by the persistence of the window metaphor. It allocated a process of analyzing the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature that is in line with Bal's epistemology of the concept-metaphor, an epistemology that instead of predicting, explaining, or generalizing, helps us specify and get an eye for differences. In this sense, the operation of the multiple thresholds in the miniature resonates with my analyses in previous chapters. Similar to the functioning of the details in the Adam and Eve miniature, the symptom in the Timur miniature, and the ornamentation in the portrait of Sultan Ahmed III, the threshold conveys a theoretical opening into images through which, not the truth, but the unthought of the image can come forth.

Jean-Luc Nancy is one of the few scholars who has taken up the notion of the threshold in visual arts and bestowed it with analytical potentiality. In his essay "On the Threshold," the threshold becomes a critical notion in his analysis of Caravaggio's *The Death of the Virgin* (1605-6). For Nancy, when exposed to a work of art the spectator "becomes an access" to that which is absolutely inaccessible (1996: 60). *The Death of the Virgin* is the paradigmatic case of being exposed to the "absolute inaccessible": death.[218] He argues that Caravaggio's painting not only paints the threshold of death but is itself a threshold. When we enter the scene, we

[218] I will not expand on Nancy's musings about death as a singular event, which cannot be presented by pictorial or any other means. One is always on the other side of death or beyond it.

are neither inside nor outside the work; we "*compear*," co-exist with the presence of the apostles, the Virgin Mary, and Mary Magdalene. This co-presence reminds the viewer that "[f]rom the inside of (the) painting to the outside of (the) painting there is nothing, no passage. There is painting, there is us, indistinctly, distinctly" (61). This incommensurable distance between inside and outside, Nancy argues, reassures us of our existence and the fact that we accede neither to the inside nor the outside of ourselves. Hence, the painting "paints the threshold of existence." In these conditions, he states, "to paint does not mean to represent, but simply to pose the ground, the texture, and the pigment of the threshold" (61).

Nancy states that what separates the Virgin from Mary Magdalene and from the spectator who "compears" with them is not death, however. In between the two women, "there is only the immobile material stuff of the painting – the canvas, the oil, the pigment and the texture, and the most important thing created by these, the use of light" (Heikkilä, 2007: 237). The materiality of painting cancels out the demand to see the invisible either beyond the picture or inside or outside of it; hence *everything* is there in the painting, "right at it, on the threshold, like its very oil, its weave, and its pigment" (Nancy, 1996: 59). Martta Heikkilä contends that Nancy's explication of Caravaggio's painting seems to suggest that we, "as spectators, are in a position which is parallel to our existence as mortals: there is no access to the 'mystery' or the hidden invisible inside behind the surface of a work of art, since we cannot penetrate into the obvious facts of the painting, that is, into its materiality" (2007: 237). Instead, as long as we remain on the threshold of its inappropriability, we also ourselves *exist* as the living threshold of death.

In his quest for another conception of painting, Nancy puts the viewer on the threshold where one does not explain the painting but rather gets an eye for differences. In front of the painting or, better, at its threshold, Nancy seems to be recollecting a threshold experience between "this" and the "other" sides of both painting and death. The encounter is marked with ambivalence and transition. According to Walter Benjamin such experiences are in abeyance. He writes:

> Rites of passage—this is the designation in folklore for the ceremonies that attach to death and birth, to marriage, puberty, and so forth. In modern life, these transitions are becoming ever more unrecognizable and impossible to experience. We have grown very poor in threshold experiences. Falling

> asleep is perhaps the only such experience that remains to us. (But together with this, there is also waking up). (1999: 494)

Nancy's work and his analysis of the Caravaggio painting in particular seem to suggest that images may be another residue of the transitional experiences that Benjamin deems to have been lost in modern life.

My aim, however, is not to compare our encounter with the *Gazanfer Ağa* miniature either to a state of awakening as the last residue of our threshold experiences or to an access to the inaccessible. If the threshold is a zone of transition between one state of consciousness and another, as Benjamin suggests, the miniature encourages us to dwell at such a passage. It does so by giving the viewer an opportunity to envisage her relation with works of art through notions other than those previously taken as norms, such as the window or the mirror. The viewer experiences a different mode of knowing and sensing art objects than those dictated by the window trope. This experience involves an oscillation from a state of certainty, transparency, and unconditioned visibility to a zone characterized by transitional, relational, opaque, and precarious ways of seeing and knowing. The miniature, experienced as a threshold between different modes of representation as well as a "thresholder" of the visible, invites her to perch on the verge. By so doing, the threshold as a metaphor/concept illuminates not what the miniature is (and is about) but what it does. It helps us to designate and analyze—rather than describe—the viewer's experience. It enables us to conceive images neither as windows nor as mirrors but as spaces to dwell on.

EPILOGUE *or* the AFTERLIFE

Given my approach in these chapters, it seems fitting to usher in my conclusions what I call the "afterlife" of Ottoman miniature paintings. This study has argued for the contemporary agency of these miniatures by drawing on their theoretical underpinnings. Such agency can further be detected in the realm of cultural practice through contemporary artworks that engage with miniature aesthetics long after the miniatures have lost their authentic context and meaning.[219]

Inspired by what Bal calls "preposterous history," an approach that inquires into the ways in which contemporary images rework past art forms, I will briefly focus on two recent works, the novel *My Name is Red* and the film *Waiting for Heaven*, which were introduced in the fourth and third chapters, respectively. These works envision the ways in which the art of miniature painting can become the objects of contemporary encounters in other media than painting. [220] In so doing, they provide the basis not only for "preposterous (hi)stories" but also for unique experiments of writing and filmmaking "in miniature" that explore both contemporary aesthetics and the expressive potentialities of the miniature itself. Moreover, they deem the miniatures to be their theoretical objects—objects that raise questions pertaining to alternative ways of creating literature and cinema. Therefore, these works resonate with the premises of this study in the realm of artistic practice, not only speaking back to this book but also opening up a realm of further inquiry into Ottoman miniatures.

Orhan Pamuk's novel *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (My Name is Red, 1998/2001) demonstrates the complex ways in which art can act upon the past. This active engagement manifests itself in the distinct style in which the novel is written. The story is recounted through the consciousness of twenty-one characters, ranging from

[219] My use of the term "afterlife" comes close to Aby Warburg's notion of *Nachleben*. Didi-Huberman explains that the term "refers to the survival (the continuity or afterlife and metamorphosis) of images and motifs—as opposed to their renascence after extinction or, conversely, their replacement by innovations in image and motif" (2003: 273). In this sense, Warburg proposed a temporal model for art history radically different from any employed at the time by introducing the problem of memory into the history of motifs and images.

[220] For the notion of "preposterous history" see Bal (1999). She writes: "The work performed by later images obliterates the older images as they were before that intervention and creates new versions of old images instead" (1). Such an inquiry points to a reversal, "which puts what came chronologically first ('pre') as an aftereffect behind ('post') its later recycling" (7). This understanding allows Bal to establish a coevalness between the contemporary artist she discusses and the historical subject through the "notion of a shared time, defined by concerns that are both of today and then" (7).

a corpse to the color red. This narrative technique can be called polyphonic, a musical notion adopted by Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art* (1929; 1984), which refers to a narrative in which many different voices can be heard and each voice represents a different view of the truth (see also Ecevit, 2001 and Peeren 2007). Of the novel's fifty-nine chapters, no consecutive ones are told in the same voice. Almost each episode starts with a re-telling of the events in the previous chapter, but the story proceeds from a different vantage point each time. This narrative style is analogous to the dismissal of a unifying perspective in miniatures. In this way, the polyphonic form reverberates with the way the miniature provides the viewer with contrasting and contesting views of the figures seen. Instead of a totalizing perspective, which can be associated with the overwhelming consciousness of the narrator in literature called "omniscience"(see Culler, 2007 for a critique), the novel alludes to the miniatures that offer the viewer different points of view.

Another narrative aspect of *My Name Is Red* that conveys the aesthetics of the miniature is the two-dimensional depiction of characters. According to Ecevit, this "miniature" novel does not have a main character writ large, as it were: all characters share the same scale, as would be the case in a miniature. Furthermore, they are devoid of spiritual depth (2001: 145). The negation of the uniqueness and three-dimensionality of the characters not only alludes to the depiction of figures in miniatures but also flattens the "space" of the novel.

The characters' direct address of the reader is another narrative aspect of *My Name Is Red* that relates to the art of miniature. This technique points to the representation at work by alluding to a visual strategy used in miniatures. Resembling miniature figures who look at each other while keeping an eye on the viewer, the characters of the novel talk back to the reader to remind her that she is reading a novel. These three traits of *My Name Is Red*—polyphony, two-dimensionality, and the direct address of the reader—demonstrate the ways in which a contemporary literary work can preposterously, in Bal's sense, refashion formal qualities of miniature painting for its own ends. These features make the miniatures models for a narrative modesty, a "humble aesthetics" that is willfully put in place.

The film *Cenneti Beklerken* (Waiting for Heaven, 2006), written and directed by Dervis Zaim, is a comparable attempt at filmmaking in miniature. As I touched upon in the third chapter, the film engages with the tradition of miniature painting as a propaedeutic model for developing a distinct cinematic language. According to

Feride Çicekoğlu, the Ottoman visual tradition had a substantial but unconstructive impact on Turkish cinema because the "lack of a tradition of visual narration where characters reveal themselves through dramatic action [has] present[ed] obstacles" for artists working with a contemporary medium (2003b: 133). Yet such restraints can provide an alternative cinematic language that would entail "a different track, which refuses the ready-made rules developed by Western tradition" and could evolve into an aesthetic genre of its own (133).

Waiting for Heaven can be seen as an attempt to develop such an aesthetic genre. It does so, first, by incorporating miniatures as active visual elements in its filmic narrative —sometimes fading into the filmic image, and at times digitally animated. Moreover, the film employs what the director calls the "flexible temporality and spatiality" employed in Ottoman miniatures. The film overlaps incompatible spaces in a single scene and juxtaposes contesting temporalities just like the miniatures do. In so doing, it tries to challenge the normative temporal and spatial configuration of cinema.

Second, the film proposes the figure of the mirror as a metaphor for understanding the operation of the miniature. However, the mirror is not conceived as a metaphor for the painting's capability of reflecting reality; the truth of what is seen in the mirror is constantly questioned by way of the mottled stains that cover its surface. Rather than reflecting, the mirror opens itself to the world of the miniature, a realm in which the conventional perceptions of dimensionality and proportion are contested. It also provides a "distorted view" through which the film screen momentarily incorporates the spatial qualities of the miniature and thus subverts the standard, perspectival configuration.

By thus appropriating formal concerns of the art of miniature painting, *Waiting for Heaven* produces a novel cinematographic visuality. Just like *My Name Is Red*, the film does more than tell a story about miniatures; it visualizes the story by reworking the miniature imaginary. These two works preposterously act upon the forgotten tradition of miniature painting—its conventional motifs and modes of representation—so as to inquire into the ways in which it contributes to the construction of an unconventional language of artistic expression in their respective media. This way of engaging with past forms of art is not a nostalgic hope for the salvation of the deceased—hence, a requiem—but rather represents a way of writing and visualizing a preposterous view of history. Above all, these works attempt to

construct productive encounters not only between the past and present but also between different media that have previously been considered antagonistic.

Thus far, I have speculated on the "ultimate fate" of the collective protagonist of this study, Ottoman miniature paintings, in the fashion of a literary epilogue. By drafting these initial notes for further research I hope to have pointed out the destiny not only of the miniatures but also of this study—not a definite ending, but rather a new potential encounter.

This study began by arguing for the semantic function of ostensibly insignificant pictorial elements and culminated with a proposal for an alternative epistemology of painting. The process aspired not only to formulate a fresh approach for studying miniature painting but also to revisit concepts we work with in understanding visual phenomena. My discussions on intimate looking, horizontal viewing, ornamental aura, and the threshold are the conceptual contributions of this research that will be beneficial for the examination of other forms of manifestations of visual culture. I hope to contribute to our quest to envision alternative visual epistemologies through the diverse methods I adopted in my chapters—detailed reading, relooking, cross-media examination, an attentiveness to the object's materiality, and metaphorical inquiry.

I hope that my book will open up a productive discussion in the specific field of Ottoman art. I conceive my work as a committed response to the crisis of art history that has been observed in the last decade. Therefore, my appraisal of previous studies on Ottoman miniatures should be understood as an act of "critical intimacy" through which one can cast a fresh look at Ottoman miniatures (Spivak, 1999; Bal, 2002).

The contributions of this thesis can be summed up as follows:

i) *Materiality*: Even though there have been numerous works on the book as an object, these studies tend to examine only the processes of production and diverse aspects of bookmaking (such as paper-making and book-binding). My approach relied on an unremitting focus on the book as a portable, self-contained site for reading and seeing that affects the ways in which the viewer produces the meaning of the miniatures.

ii) *Narrative reading*: The relation between text and image has always been an important field of inquiry and it has been examined—though not systematically—by following the iconographic methodology, which has already been submitted to

scrutiny as a method of inquiry regarding non-Western visual production. Instead of insisting on iconographic analysis, I proposed that such an approach should be combined with narrative reading that privileges iconographically non-functional details.

iii) *Ornamentation*: Previous studies regarded the ornamental as a form of illumination. My approach on the ornamental relied on its constitutive function as a *parergon* as well as an auratic shield warding off the viewer's gaze. In this way I departed from the conventional understanding of the role of ornamentation as a vehicle of visual pleasure.

iv) *Representation of women*: Depiction of female figures have remained fairly marginal in the study of Ottoman miniatures, with the possible exception of Levnî's oeuvre. My study attempted to overcome this gender(ed) gap by putting the woman back in the picture and arguing for gender to be a primary dimension of visual representation.

v) *Orientalism*: The issue of Orientalism has never been addressed in relation to miniature painting, although it has become a subject of inquiry in the analysis of the Ottoman visual production of the nineteenth century. I demonstrated that the miniaturists engaged with Orientalist imagery and appropriated its specific language and style.

vi) *Western influence*: I argued that the so-called Frank painting was a constitutive part of the tradition of miniature painting since its institutionalization in the fifteenth century. However, instead of focusing on how certain forms and techniques were imitated or applied in miniatures, I proposed that the analyst should investigate the ways in which they were negotiated and at times negated.

Through these different angles, this study sought to disorient the conventional ways of researching non-Western visual production. Rather than exoticizing Ottoman miniatures as the "other" to the canon or essentializing them as mere products of a chronologically prior and geographically distant culture that remains outside the canon, I tried to underline the historical cross-cultural encounters between East and West. In this way, I framed miniature paintings not as uncontaminated, homogeneous cultural artifacts belonging to a certain visual regime but as sites where the productive process of cross-cultural negotiation is articulated. In addition to underscoring historical negotiations, I proposed that examining certain formal similarities as well as differences between modern painting and miniature

paintings—such as the reclaiming of the material support, flatness, and play with dimension and scale— enriches our understanding of the miniatures. This approach enables us to envision, and write, a non-linear and non-canonical history of art in which images, in their singularity, are conceived as sites where the essential questions of representation are articulated.

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SUMMARY

This study focuses on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman illustrated manuscripts. It aims to develop a novel concept-based methodology for analyzing miniature paintings and argues that they possess agency in contemporary culture as "theoretical objects" that teach us how to think, speak, and write about art today.

The first chapter explores the narrative function of the pictorial detail in the process of reading images. It not only makes inquiry into the ways in which words and images interact but also sketches out a methodological stance that will guide this study. To address the issues pertaining to reading, I examine a seventeenth-century miniature painting that visualizes a story that is universally known (at least in the West, and further afield as well): the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. I show how certain iconographically dysfunctional details that do not easily fit in the pre-textual framing of the miniature open up a process of narrative reading, which privileges the detail as a site of meaning on its own. By so doing, the first chapter demonstrates that images are not merely prefigured by official texts but also, and above all, *post*-performed by the viewer, a premise developed in the following chapters.

In the following chapter, I advance my take on the process of reading in greater detail by engaging with the notions of rereading and palimpsestic looking. I deal with conventional modes of viewing and visual discourses invoked by images and imposed on them by their viewers. I look at an eighteenth-century single-page nude miniature entitled *Woman bathing in the Hamam* by the court artist Abdullah Buharî. This miniature, a unique occurrence in the scarcely existing genre of the nude, appropriates the style and content of so-called bazaar miniatures (by local miniaturists working outside of the imperial atelier) that drew on Orientalist images from costume albums produced by European artists. Through its negotiation with the Orientalist gaze—handed down to it from these albums as well as local bazaar miniatures—the miniature encourages us to ponder the conventional ways of addressing a nude that have been formulated in binary oppositions such as gazing and glancing, or returning/subverting the gaze.

I argue that the *Woman bathing in the Hamam* miniature challenges the distanced, voyeuristic, and almost rapist reading enabled and indeed encouraged by the Orientalist imagery. It offers an alternative mode of looking, playing out what I

call an “intimate encounter.” The miniature fosters a spatial, embodied, haptic, and erotic intimacy that plays on the boundary between knowing and not-knowing the other’s body. As such, the miniature, while proposing an intimate look as a mode of engagement, simultaneously prompts us to reconsider the concept of intimacy. Ultimately, based on the two diverse understandings of the intimate as have been advanced by Gérard Wajcman and Hamid Dabashi, I argue that the miniature promotes an instance of intersubjective intimacy in which the image looks back at and touches the viewer.

Chapter 3 zooms out from the detail to a wider realm of inquiry, namely the representation of time and movement in painting. I look at a set of miniatures from the *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, which gives a day-to-day visual and verbal account of the circumcision festival of Sultan Ahmed III’s sons. The miniature series under consideration depicts the Sultan’s procession in three sets of double-paged miniatures spread over six pages. I propose that the arrangement of the miniatures has an anachronistic cinematic “touch” to it because the technique underlines a problem of representing an *event*—a problem that extends into the treatment of time and space within motion. My comparison between the two incompatible media relies on a “critical loop” between media—a concept inspired by the writings of the Soviet cinematographer Sergei Eisenstein—through which the problematic tradition of representation that has been handed down to the figurative arts over time can be compared and contrasted. This interpretative method allows me to address issues concerning representation in the series by engaging a chain of cinematic concepts such as the still and the out-of-field as well as the notions of montage and the interval. This montage of concepts articulates the ways in which the procession miniatures produce an idea of event-ness in both effect and affect so as to help construct an imperial visuality.

In the following chapter, I trace the production of the imperial visuality further by focusing on one of the most established genres in Ottoman painting, namely, portraiture. The miniature portrait of Sultan Ahmed III by Levnî is an exceptional miniature in sultanic portraiture since its ornamentation, taken to the level of *horror vacui*, nearly overwhelms the main subject—the figure of the sultan. In this sense, the miniature problematizes not so much the core issues of referentiality and likeness but the very function of imperial portraiture. To delineate what this portrait does to its viewer, I first assert that the ornamental is a site of

meaning, a constructive supplement, or a *parergon* that creates a resolutely flat and opaque pictorial space. Additionally, the ornamentation provides the miniature with an "auratic" shield (a notion advanced by Walter Benjamin), distancing the viewer from the image and simultaneously screening her gaze from access to the sultan's inner qualities, and thus prohibiting the achievement of what has usually been considered one of the defining traits of a "successful" portrait.

Subsequently I address the ways in which the miniature portrays the sitter as *the sultan*. I propose that it does not represent an individual—Ahmed III—but presents the sultan, conceptually, as an image. The viewer is not provided with *a* sultan, but is shown the meaning of sultan-ness. This view concords with Gülru Necipoğlu's argument that the Ottoman sultan differs from his contemporaries by an irreconcilable invisibility that is epitomized by the architectural structure of the Topkapi Palace (2000). In this sense, the miniature portrait reinforces the sultan's power to not be seen, or to be seen only as a silhouette that cannot be imbued with individuality.

In the fifth chapter, I dwell on material aspects of miniatures by engaging with physical and conceptual features of their primary medium, the book. A miniature from the *Rawdat al-Safa* depicting the campaign of King Timur (a.k.a. Tamerlane) against Sultan Husayn directs me to focus on the scale, dimension, and physical orientation of miniatures as conditioned by their placement in books so as to disentangle their implications for the process of reading. The directionality of looking proposed by the Timur miniature, which is analogous to that of reading a book, brings about a problem concerning the orientation of the viewing process. The mode of reading encouraged by the miniature is significantly different from the viewing trajectory promoted by the tableau and wall painting, which follow the vertical orientation of the human body. Following critiques of verticality offered by Walter Benjamin, Leo Steinberg, and Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois, as well as their arguments concerning the horizontal image in modernism, I argue that the miniature suggests a total horizontalization of the viewing process that affects the viewer's body as much as her intellect.

Additionally, the image combines the experience of horizontalization with a process of miniaturization that has a subversive potential, affecting the viewer's physical and intellectual encounter with objects. In the Timur miniature, at the juncture of miniaturization and horizontalization, an invisible "object," a detail in the

center, takes over the image. This invisible detail offers a narrative reading by operating as a device for what has been conceptualized as a "pregnant moment"—a moment that opens up to a future-to-come that cannot be incorporated within the miniature. Moreover, it functions as a symptom, as Georges Didi-Huberman called it, indicating a passage to "another state of painting."

In the final chapter, I scrutinize the state of painting advanced in miniature painting by introducing the novel concept of the threshold, which I propose to be an alternative to one of the "founding" metaphors of visual theory, namely the window. The miniature entitled "The Theological School of Gazanfer Ağa," executed by Ahmed Nakşî in the *Divan-i Nadiri*, incorporates representational techniques—such as the illusion of depth—that have been considered foreign to the idiom of traditional miniature painting. Scholars have proposed that this miniature negotiates with the notion of painting as a window.

Accordingly, I trace the logic of the tableau-window and suggest that it is an "epistemological metaphor" that produces the knowledge of its object and the conditions under which it becomes knowable. The trope achieves these ends by juxtaposing the discourses of the frame and of transparency, both of which are burdened with the baggage of the window-object. The Gazanfer Ağa miniature enters into a complex negotiation with both discourses. The miniature frame, instead of offering up the painting as an immediately readable object (as suggested by the discourses of the frame and of transparency), encourages a liminal experience of looking that is caught between different modes of representation: looking, reading, and sensing. Moreover, the viewer's acts of looking are "thresholded" by means of the horizontal layering of the pictorial plane, tainting the encounter with opacity rather than imbuing it with transparency. In this sense, the miniature as a threshold prompts a process of looking that constantly questions the status of the frame as well as the instantaneous visibility and readability of the image being seen. By so doing, it provides an alternative visual epistemology by encouraging the analyst to dwell in a way of knowing that is transitional, relational, opaque, and precarious, rather than being in the state of certainty, transparency, and unconditioned visibility that is epitomized by the window metaphor.

I conclude this book by tracing the "afterlife" of miniature painting in the realm of artistic practice so as to underscore reverberations of my study in a wider realm. Contrary to the common conviction that Ottoman miniature painting ceased to

exist by the end of the eighteenth century (as it had lost its original function and context), I suggest that its aesthetic concerns survived and can be found in the "cracks" of modernity. Inspired by Mieke Bal's notion of "preposterous history," I discuss the ways in which two contemporary works, namely Orhan Pamuk's novel *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (*My Name is Red*) and Derviş Zaim's film *Cenneti Beklerken* (*Waiting for Heaven*), engage with the tradition of Ottoman miniature painting and develop a novel literary and cinematographic language conditioned by their encounter with miniatures. These works, I suggest, not only reverberate with the concerns of my study in the field of artistic practice but also open up a further realm of theoretical inquiry.

SAMENVATTING

Deze studie legt zich toe op een analyse van zeventiende- en achttiende-eeuwse Ottomaanse geïllustreerde manuscripten. Het heeft als doel een nieuwe concept-gebaseerde methodologie te ontwikkelen van het analyseren van miniaturen, met als uitgangspunt het argument dat deze miniaturen een "agency" bevatten als theoretische objecten in onze hedendaagse cultuur, die ons aangeven hoe we vandaag de dag over kunst kunnen denken, spreken en schrijven.

Het eerste hoofdstuk analyseert de narratieve functie van picturale details in het "lezen" van beelden. Het doet niet alleen onderzoek naar de manier waarop woorden en beelden op elkaar inwerken, maar zet ook het methodologische standpunt uiteen dat deze studie leidt. Als case study kijk ik naar een zeventiende-eeuwse miniatuur dat een universeel bekend verhaal (of in ieder geval bekend in het Westen en ver daarbuiten) afbeeldt: de verdrijving van Adam en Eva uit het paradijs. Ik laat zien hoe bepaalde iconografisch disfunctionele details die niet makkelijk in de pre-tekstuele interpretatie van het werk passen, een narratief leesproces in gang zetten waarin het detail voorop wordt gesteld als drager van betekenis. Op die manier laat het eerste hoofdstuk zien dat de interpretatie van beelden niet alleen door officiële teksten gestuurd wordt maar ook, en in het bijzonder, achteraf geconstrueerd wordt door de kijker. Deze aanname wordt in de volgende hoofdstukken verder ontwikkeld.

In het tweede hoofdstuk werk ik mijn standpunt over het leesproces in meer detail uit door de begrippen "herlezen" en "palimpsestisch kijken" bij mijn analyse te betrekken. Ik bestudeer hierbij eerst de traditionele manieren van kijken en de visuele discoursen die door beelden opgeroepen en door de beschouwer opgelegd worden. Ik kijk naar een achttiende eeuwse naaktminiatuur van een naakt getiteld *Vrouw badend in de Hamam* door hofschilder Abdullah Buharî. Deze miniatuur is één van de zeldzame naakt-miniaturen en hanteert de stijl en het onderwerp van de zogenaamde bazaar-miniaturen (door plaatselijke miniaturisten die buiten het atelier van de sultan werkten). Deze bazaar-miniaturen maakten gebruik van Oriëntaalse beelden uit kostuumalbums van Europese kunstenaars. De Oriëntalistische blik van deze albums en van de plaatselijke bazaar miniaturen, spoort de beschouwer aan om na te denken over de conventionele manier van het kijken naar een naakt, zoals die traditioneel

geformuleerd wordt in termen van binaire tegenstelling, zoals het kijken/aanschouwen en het terugkaatsen/ondergraven van de blik.

Ik stel dat de miniatuur *Vrouw badend in de Hamam* deze afstandelijke, voyeuristische, en bijna verkrachtende lezing, die aangewakkerd en mogelijk gemaakt wordt door een Oriëntaalse lezing, onderuithaalt. In plaats daarvan biedt het ons een alternatieve manier van kijken, door wat ik een "intieme ontmoeting" noem te laten plaatsvinden. De miniatuur bevordert een ruimtelijke, belichaamde, haptische en erotische intimiteit die zich afspeelt op de grens tussen het kennen en "niet-kennen" van het lichaam van de ander. Op deze manier stimuleert het miniatuur ons om het werk met een intieme blik te aanschouwen, terwijl het ons gelijktijdig het begrip intimiteit laat overwegen. Op basis van twee uiteenlopende interpretaties van intimiteit door Gérard Wajcman en Hamid Dabashi, betoog ik dat de miniatuur een moment van intersubjectieve intimiteit oproept waarbij het beeld terugkijkt naar, en zo in aanraking komt met, de beschouwer.

Hoofdstuk 3 legt zich toe op een breder onderzoekskader, namelijk de weergave van tijd en beweging in schilderingen. Ik kijk naar een aantal miniaturen van de *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, die een visueel en verbaal verslag geven van het besnijdenisfestival van de zonen van Sultan Ahmed III. Deze serie van drie miniaturen (die elk twee pagina's in beslag nemen) laat de optocht van de Sultan zien. Ik stel voor deze miniaturen op een anachronistische en cinematografische manier gearrangeerd zijn. De gebruikte techniek vestigt de aandacht op de moeilijkheid van het weergeven van een gebeurtenis (*event*), van tijd en ruimte in beweging. Ik onderbouw mijn gebruik van cinematografische theorie door te verwijzen naar een concept van de Russische cinematograaf Sergei Eisenstein Hij heeft het in zijn werk over een kritische "loop" tussen verschuillende media, waardoor de problematische conventies van representatie die door de eeuwen heen in de beeldende kunsten zijn overgeleverd, vergeleken en tegenover elkaar gesteld kunnen worden. Deze interpretatieve methode biedt de mogelijkheid om bepaalde aspecten van representatie in de miniaturenserie te onderzoeken aan de hand van cinematografische begrippen, zoals "still," "out-of-field," "montage" en "interval." Door deze combinatie van begrippen is het mogelijk te analyseren hoe in de processie-miniaturen het idee van een "gebeuren" in zowel effect als affect wordt geconstrueerd, zodat een "imperial visuality"geconstrueerd wordt.

In het volgende hoofdstuk ga ik wat dieper in op de productie van een "imperial visuality" door te concentreren op één van de meest gevestigde genres in de Ottomaanse kunst, namelijk de portretkunst. Het miniatuurportret van Sultan Ahmed III door Levnî is een bijzonder voorbeeld van sultan-portretkunst. De decoraties, uitgevoerd in *horror vacui* stijl, lijken bijna het onderwerp ervan, namelijk de sultan zelf, te bedelven. Deze miniatuur vestigt dan ook niet zozeer de aandacht op het probleem van representatie en gelijkenis, maar op dat van de functie van de portretkunst zelf. Om aan te geven wat dit portret doet met de beschouwer, stel ik eerst voorop dat decoratie een drager van betekenis is, een constructieve aanvulling of een *parergon* dat een plat en ondoorzichtig beeldoppervlakte neerzet. Ook verleent de versiering de miniatuur een aura-achtig schild (een begrip dat naar voren wordt gebracht in het werk van Walter Benjamin), dat de beschouwer op afstand plaatst van het beeld en tegelijkertijd haar blik afschermt van het "innerlijk" van de sultan. Zo wordt wat normaalgesproken als één van de bepalende kwaliteiten van een geslaagd portret gezien wordt, onmogelijk gemaakt.

Hierna onderzoek ik op welke manier de miniatuur het onderwerp neerzet als de sultan. Ik stel voor dat het werk geen individu —Ahmed III— weergeeft, maar "de sultan" als begrip en als beeltenis. De beschouwer krijgt niet de sultan te zien, maar wordt de betekenis van het sultan-zijn voorgespiegeld. Deze opvatting strookt met het argument van Gülru Necipoğlu, die meent dat de Ottomaanse sultan verschilt van zijn tijd- en ambtsgenoten door een onomstotelijke onzichtbaarheid, belichaamd in de architectonische structuur van het Topkapi paleis (2000). Op deze manier versterkt de miniatuur de macht van de sultan om niet gezien te hoeven worden, of alleen maar gezien te worden als een silhouet zonder individuele kenmerken.

In het vijfde hoofdstuk analyseer ik de materiele aspecten van miniaturen door mijn aandacht te richten op de fysieke en conceptuele kenmerken van het boek. Het boek functioneert tenslotte als drager van de miniatuur. Ik neem een miniatuur van de *Rawdat al-Safa* dat de campagne van koning Timur (a.k.a. Tamerlane) tegen sultan Husayn laat zien, als uitgangspunt voor een onderzoek dat zich richt op de invloed van de plaats van het miniatuur in het boek, niet op het leesproces, maar op de schaal, de afmetingen en de fysieke oriëntatie van miniaturen zelf, zoals deze bepaald worden door hun plaats in boeken. De kijkrichting zoals die door de Timur miniatuur bepaald wordt, die analoog is aan de manier waarop een boek gelezen wordt, veroorzaakt een probleem met betrekking tot de oriëntatie van het kijkproces.

De leeswijze die door de miniatuur wordt aangemoedigd verschilt aanmerkelijk van de manier van kijken die het tableau en de muurschildering in gang zetten. Deze volgen beiden de verticale oriëntatie van het menselijke lichaam. In navolging van kritiek van verticaliteit door Walter Benjamin, Leo Steinberg, en Rosalind Krauss en Yve-Alain Bois, en hun standpunten over het horizontale beeld binnen het modernisme, beargumenteer ik dat de miniatuur de suggestie wekt van een totale "horizontalizatie" van het kijkproces, dat zowel het lichaam als het intellect van de beschouwer beïnvloedt.

Ook combineert het beeld de ervaring van horizontaliteit en het proces van schaalverkleining op een manier die potentieel subversief werkt, omdat het de fysieke en intellectuele ontmoeting van beschouwer en object beïnvloedt. In de Timur miniatuur, op het raakvlak tussen verkleining en "horizontalizatie," neemt een onzichtbaar object, een centraal detail, de hele beeltenis over. Dit onzichtbare detail stuurt de manier van lezen door dat het functioneert als iets dat een "zwanger" (pregnant) moment genoemd wordt—een moment dat openstaat naar een toekomst die niet besloten ligt in het miniatuur zelf. Ook functioneert het als een "symptoom," zoals Georges Didi-Huberman het noemt, van een overgang naar een "ander soort schilderen."

In het laatste hoofdstuk onderzoek ik de specifieke kenmerken van de schilderkunst die in miniaturen naar voren komen, door gebruik te maken van het nieuwe concept van de "drempel," als vervanging van d metafoor van het "raam" dat normaalgesproken gebruik wordt in visuele theorie. De miniatuur waar iik naar kijk, "De Theologische School van Gazanfer Ağa," door Ahmed Nakşî in het *Divan-i Nadiri*, maakt gebruik van bepaalde afbeeldingtechnieken, zoals de illusie van diepte, die gezien worden als ongebruikelijk in het lexicon van de traditionele miniatuurkunst. Wetenschappers hebben geopperd dat dit miniatuur het idee van schilderkunst als "raam" ondermijnt.

Vervolgens observeer ik de logica van het tableauraam en stel voor dat deze een "epistemologisch metafoor" behelst dat verantwoordelijk is voor wat wij over het object kunnen weten, en voor de context waarin deze kennis mogelijk wordt gemaakt. Dit wordt bereikt door een wisselwerking te creëeren tussen de discoursen over kadrering en over doorzichtigheid, discoursen waarin het idee van het raamobject beperkend werkt. De Gazanfer Ağa miniatuur gaat met deze beide discoursen in dialoog. De kadrering van de miniatuur, in plaats van het werk aan te

bieden als direct leesbaar object zoals deze discoursen suggereren, spoort aan tot een liminale beschouwerservaring die zich tussen verschillende vormen van representatie afspeelt: beschouwen, lezen en aanvoelen. Ook wordt de beschouwer "bedrempeld" door de horizontale gelaagdheid van de oppervlakte van de afbeelding, die de ontmoeting tussen beschouwer en object gelaagd, in plaats van transparant, maken. Op deze manier zet de miniatuur als drempel aan tot een beschouwingproces dat de status van de kadrering, en de directe zichtbaarheid en leesbaarheid van het beschouwde beeld, constant in twijfel trekt. Door dit te doen, verstrekt het de beschouwer een alternatieve epistemologie van kijken die tijdelijk, betrekkelijk, ondoorzichtig en instabiel is, in plaats van zeker, doorzichtig en onvoorwaardelijk, zoals in het raammetafoor besloten ligt.

Ik sluit dit boek af door de "afterlife" van de miniatuur in kunst te traceren, en zo de aannames van mijn onderzoek in een wijdere context te plaatsen. In tegenstelling tot de gebruikelijke veronderstelling dat de Ottomaanse miniatuurkunst na het einde van de achteinde eeuw ophield met bestaan (omdat het zijn oorspronkelijke functie en context kwijt was), stel ik voor dat de esthetische belangen die het uitdraagt nog altijd bestaan, en waargenomen kunnen worden in de huidige tijd. Geïnspireerd door het idee van "preposterous history" van Mieke Bal, bespreek ik de manieren waarop twee hedendaagse werken, namelijk Orhan Pamuk's roman *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (*Mijn Naam is Karmozijn*) en Derviş Zaim's film *Cenneti Beklerken* (*Wachten op de Hemel*), de discussie aangaan met de traditie van Ottomaanse miniatuurschilderingen, en zo nieuwe literaire en cinematografische conventies ontwikkelen door het citeren van miniaturen. Deze werken, stel ik voor, brengen niet alleen vraagstukken van mijn dissertatie naar voren, maar wijzen ook op mogelijkheden voor verdere theoretisch onderzoek.