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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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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.