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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 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 The miniatures in these books are significant not only as historical documents but also as images performing their imperial function upon their contemporary viewers.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.

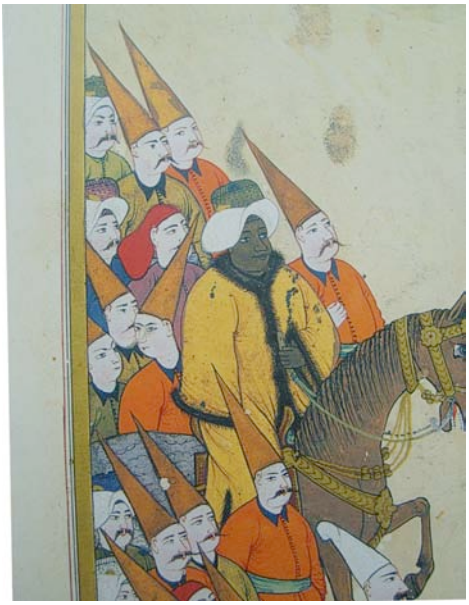

Figure 17. Detail, *Sûrname-i Vehbi*, (f. 16a).

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.