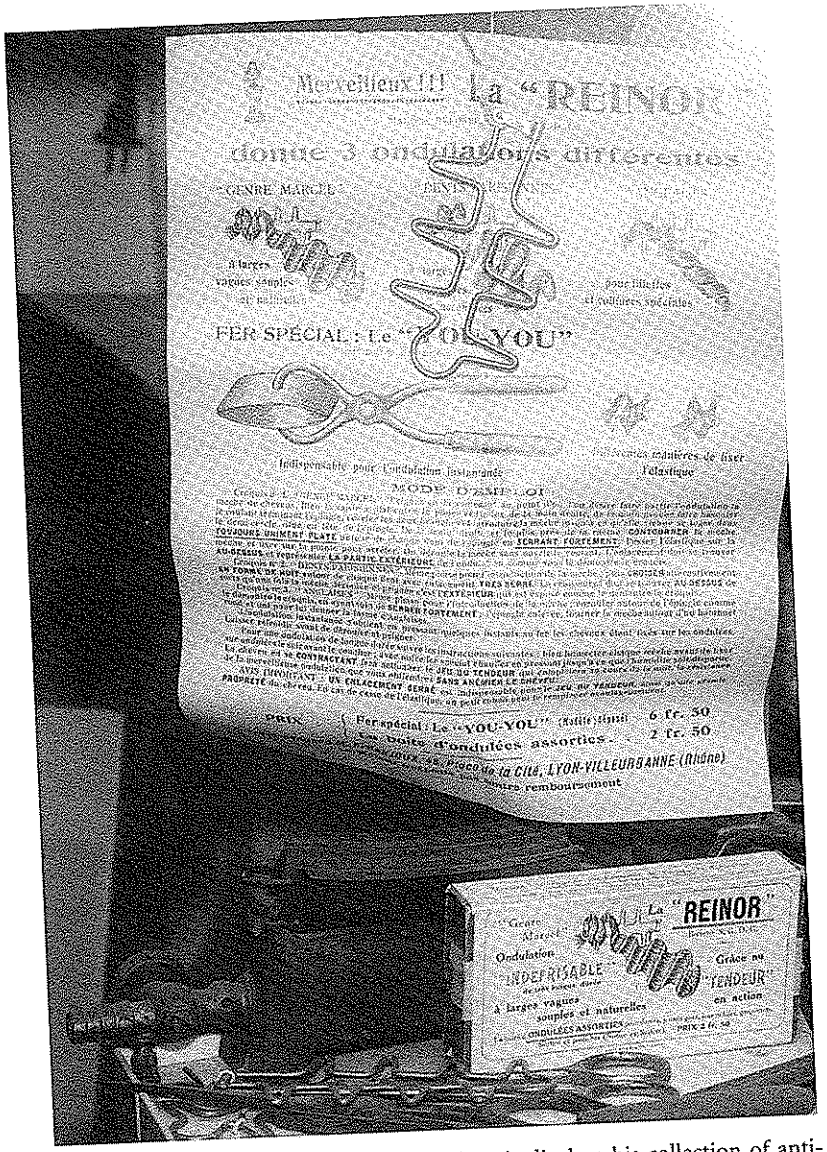
3 ▪ SOCIETY, SALONS, AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the eighteenth century, the word "society" simply meant being in the presence of others. This companionship might be qualified as "polite," "brilliant," or "rough."[1] We might keep this in mind in thinking about salons, for all salons are places designed to receive society, whether as reception rooms in Middle Eastern offices and homes in Casablanca, the "salons" that different professions organize in large conventions centers in Paris, or salons where beauticians produce looks. They all thrive on exchanges between people in ways that distinguish them from the "public" arena. Yet they bring together people who need have no special ties beyond the space of interaction they define. Keeping this in mind helps us to understand how a common appellation could come to describe meetings among artists and their expositions, the saloons of the Wild West, and beauty salons.

The development of a room called a salon in the *hôtels* of seventeenth-century aristocrats and bourgeois in France was linked to changes in perception of public space. New gradations were emerging, rather like the gradual heating of the rooms of the hammam, among intimate connections, good but general company, and the broad open spaces of the public sphere. A keener sense of privacy expressed itself in architecture and in Rococo style. It was promoted by such figures as Madame de Pompadour, who, as Louis XV's mistress then advisor, "not only encouraged Louis's interest in domestic architecture, but also directed it toward the small, the precious, and the intimate."[2] The value of privacy, intimacy, and comfort was exhibited by the development of specialized spaces not only at court but in bourgeois homes. Servants now slept in their own quarters, and children were assigned their own rooms. Chambers to entertain the family and intimate friends were distinguished from the salon, where many kinds of people could be received. As Witold Rybczynski points out in his history of the idea of home, this increased specialization included a clearer demarcation of inside and out, a point that was made through attention to the details of interior decoration and the improved comfort of furniture, particularly chairs and sofas.[3]

Women played a central role in social life of the ancien régime, and many grandes dames of the aristocracy were instrumental in promoting these new ways of arranging public and private space. But this did not imply, as it might have in other contexts, that they then retreated into the "feminine" space of the intimate and the curved and padded lounge chair. Indeed, when we remember this period and recall women like Mme. de Pompadour, what often comes to mind is the way that they used the salon to bring together not just any public, but a carefully chosen society. The salons sent brilliant conversation and scintillating literary and political ideas circling around these brilliant women.[4] Salons centered a changing society and played on ideas of excellence and social status, beauty and scholarship. These were exclusive affairs. Attending a given salon indicated that one was able and willing to be associated with people of a certain social set. A certain loyalty to the hostess was necessary, as everything circled around this figure of the belle dame. Her elegance, beauty, and intelligence served to draw brilliant, passionate, or controversial people toward her. She devised the invitations and played a role in deciding who could enter the conversation. She did this in a setting that, though public, was yet a carefully decorated, individualized interior—a place that promised a comfort not available in meeting places like cafés or coffeehouses.

The literary salon of the old aristocracy would have a long life under France's various nineteenth-century monarchies and republics. In the 1890s, the institution was "exported" to Egypt by a Frenchwoman who married a wealthy Egyptian. When Eugénie Le Brun created Egypt's first literary salon for women, Huda Sha'rawi and other women who would become important public figures attended it.[5] The salon idea took hold, and by the twentieth century Mayy Ziyadah organized the first salon to "mix" men and women.[6] Such associations of men with women in society were not necessarily made in all places where the salon became a separate space within the home; in some parts of the Muslim world, for instance,



Tools of the trade. A hairdresser in central Paris displays his collection of antiquated curling irons. He told me that he knows how to use all of these tools, some of which only went out of use with the diffusion of the handheld blow-dryer in the 1970s. In Cairo, curling irons heated over gas flames remain essential to the hairdresser's art. Photograph, Susan Ossman.

Tools of the trade. Photograph, Susan Ossman.

the domestic salon was where men and women might meet their pairs without the presence of the other sex.[7] But wherever the salon became the focus of the meeting of household and world, its ways of designating requirements for entry and its decor became important means of conveying important information about the people who offered hospitality there. This hospitality was not necessarily as regularly organized nor as centered around art and debate as the salons of literary ladies. But it did rely on a sense of progressive intimacies and the importance of reception. In some cases, as today among well-off families in Casablanca, a home might include more than one salon, each offering a decor to "fit" different kinds of society and distinct occasions. Most often, one room is decorated with long couches and round tables and called the Moroccan salon. Another is equipped with armchairs, coffee tables, and oil paintings; this is the European salon. The first is used for festivities such as naming celebrations and religious holidays; the second serves for parties and work-related events.[8]

All of these different salons have today become common in many parts of the world. Because they require the means to pay for a room separate from those in which one lives most of the time, people who cannot afford such comfort might meet their friends or colleagues in cafés, hammams, or clubs. The café is of particular interest, for, like the salon and public bath, it has appeared in different guises along the paths that define the field of this study. The café took form in Saudi Arabia around 1470, and Mecca, Cairo, and Istanbul became the centers of café society of the time. The institution later spread to include both coffee and tea houses throughout the Muslim and then the Christian world. But the *café maure* did not lead directly to contemporary café society as we think of it today. We must take a detour through the story of the café in Europe to make sense of how contemporary cafés in Egypt, but especially in the Maghreb, have profoundly reworked the space and interactions that we might observe today in these cities. As Omar Carlier writes, with colonization the "counter replaced the mat" as metropolitan forms became influential.[9] Chairs and tables filled spaces that were, like many of their Parisian counterparts, gradually opened up and turned toward the street. Old-style "Moorish" cafés continue to exist in Cairo, but the burgeoning new city of Casablanca was planned according to an aesthetic of turning outward: toward the ocean, the port, and the street. In this way, as in others, the new

city on the coast of Africa did not so much "convert" old forms as offer the most avant-garde models of them to Paris and Cairo alike.[10]

In nineteenth-century Paris, the café was central to sociability outside the home. There were cafés of many sorts, and these played different roles in the lives of the well-off and the poor. In working-class cafés, as in their contemporary saloons in the United States, political or social clubs met.[11] The café thus included many of the same activities as did the bourgeois salon, but its consolidation of "society" was profoundly different. Like the salon, it was turned in on itself, away from the street, but it was nonetheless a space for which no invitation was required. In cafés, as in salons, there was a master of ceremonies. Of course, in salons, these masters were often mistresses; in cafés, although some women served drinks, owners tended to be men. The café owner earned his livelihood from the café, which was open for long hours every day. But he was different from other small businessmen. He acted as a father figure for many people, as evident in the number of bartenders who served as witness at their clients' weddings. He also had a regulating role on the nature of socializing taking place in his rooms: he acted as an intermediary with the municipal authorities.[12]

The bourgeois cafés of post-Haussmanian Paris, on the other hand, were places to display one's looks, wealth, or beautiful companion. With their large windows and open terraces they offered up the city as a moving picture.[13] These cafés produced spectacles of bourgeois opulence. They brought people to visualize emerging social distinctions and develop a new sense of "society." The working-class café offered insights into forms of sociability that might be related to the salon, but the bourgeois café shows us for what audience now light bodies were being disciplined. From its terrace we observe modern life taking form in the bodies of those who waltz alone or in groups along wide boulevards. The development of the *salon pour dames* must be related to the way girls learned to walk in front of these assemblies of eyes. All of these looks were involved in the development of a new kind of salon. The *salon pour dames* took form in response to changing lifestyles and notions of hygiene. It accompanied not only a new perception of bourgeois women "breaking out" of their intimate quarters, but also a new visibility in streets, parks, and cafés focusing on the figures of all women in unprecedented ways. The salon pour dames adopted the ideals of comfort, intimate decor, and conversa-

tion found in other salon forms. Women of "good" society could feel comfortable in these spaces. There they might catch up on the latest fashions and engage in talk with their (usually male) coiffeur in a way reminiscent of how working-class men might tell their troubles to a bartender.[14] For immigrant girls from the provinces or girls raised in "popular" (working-class) neighborhoods or by middle-class mothers who continued to pile their unwashed hair high on their heads, the importance of the salon went beyond an interest in fashion and intimate talk. It acted as a scene of instruction. It taught them new words to explain to the coiffeur how they wanted their hair done.[15] It often gave them access to publications on fashion they could not afford to purchase or, perhaps, could not read. It meant conceiving one's looks in terms of constantly evolving modes, and thinking about the picture one would make wearing these as one walked down the street. All of this research took place in the company of a specialist in a setting that, though open to all, was far from public.

In Paris the salon pour dames began to become popular in the late nineteenth century; it wasn't until after the Great War that the institution became a presence in the life of most city girls. Steven Zdatny notes that in France, "By 1921, the sector of coiffure had surpassed its pre-war population, with more than 57,000 enterprises. Through the late 1920s and 1930s the numbers continued to climb. Between 1931 and 1936 alone the population of hairdressers increased from 94,000 to over 125,000" as more women of all conditions hoped to look and walk "like the movies."[16] From the 1920s we enter the age of the "new woman"—a look that, depending on movies, fashion magazines, and political positions, had women from Paris to Cairo, New York to Shanghai bobbing their hair.[17] It is in this context, as we have seen, that well-groomed Cairene and Parisian ladies contemplated their march toward liberation and imagined ways to free their counterparts in urban Morocco.

In Casablanca, salons and French hairstyles accompanied the building of "new cities," the coming of the moving picture, and the arrival of French and southern European immigrants. At first, the Muslim and Jewish women of the medina had no use for them. The use of Western beauty products seems to have preceded the habit of salon going, but photographs collected in family albums from the 1950s show that, in at least some families, pictures seen in movies, fashion magazines, or schoolbooks were reiterated in the look of the schoolteachers, shop-

keepers, and homemakers of various origins who began to inhabit the new parts of Moroccan cities. City women of some means gradually abandoned the relatively recognizable (if varied) outfits of their religious and ethnic groups to "mix" on the street or in exclusive clubs and often took up the cry for unveiling and reform of country and working women in ways reminiscent of their Egyptian and French elite predecessors.[18] So, although Cairene beauties and Parisienne femmes fatales graced Casablancan screens and might have served as models for a fortunate few during the 1940s and 1950s, only a few women had the opportunity to think about going to the salon to mimic them.[19] It was only in the 1960s and especially the 1970s that more and more city girls of all regional backgrounds began to use the salon as a meeting place and as a complement to their formal education. Indeed, with the advent of television, for instance, sources for looks required neither literacy nor fancy connections. Even in the poorest districts one began to notice how some women began to discard the scarf popularized at independence (already expressive of a move toward a "national" as opposed to an ethnic style).[20] Hassan told me how as a child in the 1960s he was startled when he saw young women in his working-class Casablanca neighborhood walking down the street wearing "hairdos." He remembers being puzzled by the new shapes of women's heads. Used to seeing girls with their hair covered, straight, or braided, he was baffled when they suddenly sprouted "cones." He recalls pondering how such changes could be wrought, and being amazed that the women never seemed to "take the hats off." The "beehive" had come to Casablanca.

COMFORT AND CONVERSATION

Today, in Moroccan, Egyptian, and French cities, small towns, and even villages, you will find a salon pour dames. The salon is judged not only in terms of the results it can promise, but in terms of the experience it creates. As a place of learning and exchange, it continues to reflect some of the characteristics of the living room and the literary salon. The interior decorating, clientele, and location of a salon provide clues to who will feel comfortable there. Decoration and ambiance are especially important for salons that draw on clientele from outside a specific neighborhood or social circle. Alex is a fifty-six-year-old hairdresser. Of Greek origin, he

was born and lives in Cairo and has spent time working in the Gulf. He says: "In the salon I like to listen to nice music, to have a nice atmosphere to do good work. I'm interested in everything from the moment the client enters the salon until she leaves. I want her to be satisfied and I try to see if there's anything that she needs. Sometimes we forget this, but often a little thing is enough to make the place pleasant. A little smile from all of the workers gives a nice impression of the hairdresser to the client. This also depends on the space of the salon. In a large salon clients can stay longer and talk among themselves and feel at home. A smaller salon becomes simply functional."

For many people, simplicity is often seen as a guarantee of hygiene, as in the common use of light colors and white smocks reminiscent of medical clinics. As Malika, an employee in one such "functional" salon frequented by secretaries, schoolteachers, and sometimes anthropologists in Casablanca, points out: "The work in any salon is the same, but in a big institute of beauty you pay more than in the salon. If at the institute you pay more it is because the room is better decorated. You might have a living room–café inside the institute. But for the hairstyle . . . there is no difference between the salon and the institute. The only difference is that of price. The institute can double or triple the price compared to the salon." Toufik explains that though decor might attract people, it is how people are treated that makes them want to return. He works in a salon in a working-class area of Cairo, which, though not chic, is very popular. He says, "Each salon is understood in terms of the psychology of the person, if she feels at ease or not. Some salons are very simple but the client feels at home. In all of this it is the personnel that makes the salon pleasant, it is the interest they show for the client." Indeed, the arrangement, the dress of the workers, styles of music, and mix of magazines are often carefully attuned to what owners perceive to be their own "personality." Claudia, who owns and manages a Jacques Déssange salon in what was until recently a working-class area of Paris, points out that the salon should be very clean and the colors pastel and "natural." "This helps the clients to relax," she says. "You have to be 'soft' with the customers, take care of them and be at their disposal." The importance given to decor, to comfort, and often, to the orchestration of routine not only seems to move toward a homogenization of the process of decomposing and refashioning bodies, but does so in ways that can encourage specific kinds of discussion.

Talk is central in all kinds of salon. This observation might lead us to analyze the beauty salon as the latest development in the move out of the salon of domesticity toward a public place to receive guests, to a public arena where all were welcome. Salons often figure in the tales of "opening" that women tell to describe their increasing presence in public space. Such an interpretation seems coherent with Habermas's well-known ideas about the emergence of bourgeois society evolving a new sense of equality, of information, and of civility in such meeting places. His analysis focused on how conversation between equals shapes these spaces and ideals of democratic polities. With a keen attentiveness to how changes in English sociability, politics, and economy were intertwined during the eighteenth century, he drew attention to the development of institutions such as coffeehouses, where men of all classes could, for the first time, meet. And he connected their verbal exchanges to the expansion of news in papers, to the very idea that items of information could be conceived as discrete, quantifiable, and marketable. Habermas suggests that coffeehouses especially, but also French literary salons "encouraged a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether. They replaced the rituals of rank with a tact befitting equals." These institutions thus promoted a sense of a common set of concerns and the circulation of cultural products and information. They " . . . converted cultures into a commodity (and in this fashion constituted it as a culture that could be an object of discussion to begin with) [and] established the public as in principle inclusive."[21] Such ideas might be applied to contemporary salons. However, as in many analyses in this vein, the value of exchanges seems to emerge out of these spaces to the extent to which talk leads to public, political talk and a consciousness of each man's playing a part in the constitution of civil society. The literary penchants of the French salons, for instance, are presented as less "pure" examples of how new social spaces help to open up political vistas, for at the time they involved a more veiled, artistic, roundabout way of confronting explicitly political concerns, given the absolutism of France before the Revolution.

Habermas developed a complex philosophy based on relating political to communicative ideals, and other scholars have pursued further historical research into the epoch in which he grounds his analysis of Enlightenment. Don Herzog, for instance, suggests that the study of the emergence

of modern public life in Britain should include research into spaces besides coffeehouses. He seeks to round out accounts like Habermas's by exploring another major eighteenth-century English institution: the barbershop. The barbershop, Herzog argues, like the café, was an arena of political transformation.[22] He details how, at the barbershop, news was shared and political debates engaged in. The barbershop, he asserts, like the café, presents men as equivalent. It is a place to come to hear the news, express one's opinion, feel a part of the new civil society. Could not the beauty salon too, which, after all, bears the name of an institution Habermas saw as central in France's "peculiar" move toward democracy and civility, act as such a forum?

We might search after the production of talk about politics or the common good in contemporary salons. As we have seen, the idea of the anywhere body seems an equalizing measure. Epics of opening fit harmoniously with the notion of a move toward a modern idea of publics and society. A friend in Casablanca did say that she sometimes went to a salon there where the beautician made a point of encouraging "intelligent debates." "The hairdresser is a political activist," she said. "It's not all about making feminine beauties, as you say. In that salon there are only intellectual things to read—newspapers and such reading materials." In Cairo, Lucy's might be presented as a likely candidate for such an embodied glimpse of an egalitarian utopia.

> *In one of the old arcades in the new old city center, the salon is compact, but full of men and women. It has wood paneling, several pictures, and areas for pedicure, manicure, and waiting. The* helwa *(wax) for women is done upstairs. They don't do hair. On the coffee table are cards from clients and a photo of Nejib Mahfouz, who was a client. There are magazines in Arabic, German, and several other languages. A small woman with glasses and another, wearing a hijab, greet the customers and direct them to the aestheticians. Several children of employees come in with their schoolbooks. Men and women get manicures and pedicures; the man does the feet, the woman the hands. They are of all ages, and seem to know the clients well; they also know the children and talk to them. This place seems more like a "neighborhood"-style salon, but it seems people come here from other areas. The atmosphere is extremely relaxed and quite different than other salons. One gets a feeling of the functionality of the place—it is fairly reasonable. Conversations are lively, friendly, and I immediately feel at home.*

The impression of comradely exchange at Lucy's might convince us of the possibility of ideal communication situations that implicate equals in conversation aimed at the betterment of the world for all. Yet, their very particularity forces us to leave such dreams and rethink perspectives on places, public or private, developed along Habermassian lines. Many women do indeed go to the beauty salon even when they don't need to have their hair done, especially in Casablanca and Cairo. They see friends there, catch up on the latest gossip, read magazines, and even watch television. But the sense of "common concerns" varies and is rarely preoccupied with the national or international political scene in an overt way. What is held in common might be neighborhood news, a certain language, or an identification with a style of talk that excludes some women from fully participating in the conversation. Access does not guarantee meaningful involvement, and all talk is not attributed the same price in public spaces conceived as markets. Perhaps, rather than search out spaces of interaction that conform to a given idea of the polis and progress, we need to analyze how it is that certain spaces have been adopted as icons of opening epics, while others, less clear in their disentanglement of public and private, have been ignored.[23] According to Seyla Benhabib, modern philosophy's development has involved a "privatization of women's experience." She writes that, "in the philosophical tradition from Hobbes to Rawls," women have thus excluded this experience from being considered from a moral point of view: "In this tradition, the moral self reflects aspects of male experience; the 'relevant other' in this theory is never the sister but always the brother."[24]

The very constitution of what counts as serious knowledge in both philosophy and science has much to do with notions of community grounded in ideals of fraternity. The development of "intelligent eyes" in this context has been related to a move away from the consideration of the unique eye of the monarch and toward the development of a generalized eye that could see things from several points of view. This kind of intelligence was thus intimately linked to the development of an idiom that allowed for the exchange of points of view on common objects. But not all objects were of equal interest, and many kinds of people were seen as

lacking the kinds of virtue that such sight required. As Steve Shapin notes in his study of the elaboration of the tenets of modern scientific method in Britain, whereas the basis of this method involves certifying the reproducibility of results, the scientific discoveries of the time were in fact evaluated as much in terms of the social status and supposed virtue of the scientist carrying them out as any real possibility of their being replicated. Although women and assistants actually carried out much of the work in the homely laboratories of the period, the light of truth fell on their work only when it was underwritten by the scientist as "Christian gentleman." "If reputation were to assist the production of true and legitimate knowledge, then an honorable man had to remain visible as the author of that knowledge."[25] A scientific community judges the work of pairs; it does so according to rules that seem indifferent to the body or the personal characteristics of the scientist and yet, to enter into the fraternity of science requires a special kind of individual. For those Shapin studied, science required a willful exclusion not only of women and men whose experience was not to be taken seriously because it is apparently too partial, particular, or bound to bodily functions or desires. The "relevant other" was therefore a member of a fraternity of like-minded men. Only those select few were trusted to produce points of view in terms that mimicked the intelligent eye associated with the quest for universal knowledge and goodness. Women and lesser men might be reasonable, they might be trustworthy in many ways, yet their eyes were not to meet those of their brothers, if for different reasons. They might be trusted with the creation of comfort that allowed men to disengage themselves from the pull of bodily needs, thus freeing themselves for serious speculation. Such disengagement was the mark of belonging to the fraternity, and to sense its importance we must be especially attentive to private parts.

Herzog's study of English barbershops leads him to maintain that their openness to all resembled not only the café but also the bordello.[26] There, all comers could receive services for a fixed fee. And yet, while a scientist as prominent as Robert Boyle was making a virtue of his sexual abstinence, those who entered the public house were evaluated in ways that might not have been so complimentary. And once inside, the comments of the women they possessed dwelled less on their sameness than on their special qualities or individual desires. Civilizing the male body included a contrast of public decorum to private, hidden vice. And thus the belle

dame as mother, wife, or sister was set against the hidden charms of the painted lady. Men who could not play on these ideas of public and private might be ineligible for entrance into the civil fraternity. In the early days of the French Enlightenment, those who debated the serious affairs of the city often relied on women's salons and ideas. Yet, with the march of enlightened ideas, it seems, even this womens' work became less visible, less formative of notions of science and civility. Indeed, according to charts of progress based on measures of moving out of backgrounds, out of body- and virtue-bound existences toward a world of anywhere eyes, concern with morality, taste, or comfort were perceived as signs of femininity and of political immaturity. The exclusion of women from the public meeting of voices was, ironically, explained in terms of the very social graces that assured the success of the literary salon. The many guises of "personalism" continue to be opposed to modernity in contemporary political discourses in Casablanca, in Paris, and in Cairo.[27] In one fell swoop, too-close family relationships, economic corruption, and notions of influence are portrayed together as threats to the democratic development of society, now seen as a united body, not to mention for the correct functioning of the polis. The categorical imperative is often repeated not by professors of philosophy, but by bureaucrats who promote a sense of "individualism" as a force for democracy, and a civil society defined by its market aptitude. And this sense of "fairness" is opposed to what is often seen as the particularly feminine emotion of shame (*hshouma*) and ways of hiding, exhibiting, adjusting to the demands not so much of argument as to particular situations and how we animate relationships with specific kinds of others.

Lila Abu-Loghud explains, "The concepts of *hasham* (shame) and *'gl* (reason) are closely wedded in notions of the ideal woman. The woman who is 'agala (reasonable, characterized by *'gl*) is well behaved: she acts properly in social life, *highly attuned to her relative position in all interactions*."[28] According to Soumaya Naamane Gessous, hshouma is both a matter of shame and guilt, but it is present in all places and all times:

> The word doesn't need to be said, *hshouma* dictates, controls, forbids, it is there behind many actions. It concerns the poor, but also the rich, men and women, the young girl—especially the young girl—the city dweller as well as the peasant; the nomad, the scholar but also the il-

literate. It is a code which one conforms to without reflection, and it legislates all situations of existence. It's what one will say that causes fear, and the discredit will not only fall on the shoulders of the guilty party, but also on those close to him and on all of those around him.

Thus, the *hshouma* of one is not the *hshouma* of the other: *hshouma* for the young girl is not the same as for the grown woman or for a man: *hshouma* for youths isn't the same as for old people, *hshouma* in the city is not like in the country.[29]

Bernard Williams echoes these remarks when he notes not only the importance of shame to ethics, but that "Shame need not be just a matter of being seen, but of being seen by an observer with a certain view." Shame, he argues, results from being seen in the wrong position; it is rooted in a fear of being caught naked. As we have seen, the very idea of nakedness varies, and shame must take on different shades in front of various others. An awareness of these diverse positions might lead us not toward an abandonment of modern ideals, but to a keener sense of possibility and the particulars of participation than simple versions of epics of opening offer us. Williams suggests that we need to reintroduce our sense of shame into how we conceive of ethical life: "It is a mistake to take that reductive step and to suppose that there are only two options: that the other in ethical thought must be an identifiable individual or a representative of the neighbors, on the one hand, or nothing at all except an echo chamber for a solitary voice. These alternatives leave out much of the substance of our actual ethical life. The internalized other is indeed abstracted and generalized and idealized, but he is potentially somebody rather than nobody, and somebody other than me. He can provide the focus of real social expectations, of how I shall live if I act in one way rather than another, of how my actions and reactions will alter my reactions to the world around me."[30]

Beauty salons, even more than barbershops, might work to produce an ideally light body. They may play on the idea that we can become anything and anyone. But even the most fleeting visit to a salon shows the extent to which they play on this "rationalization" and equivalency in terms of the kinds of internalized others Williams describes. In salons, these others are involved in the shared secrets and the "unserious" gossip of the juicy particular. They enter into the development of competencies of beauticians. They deeply affect how clients form ideas of belles dames and painted ladies, but also how they conceive distinctions of public and private. However these spaces are defined, they are formed of the eyes and ears of named and known others, whether friends or famous stars. They work together through the en-lightened body to produce beauty and distinction and sometimes a sense of sorority. Indeed, even in salons frequented by both men and women, salon talk is strongly associated with a sense of feminization and fluff.[31] That the fuzziness of salon talk spreads over even the most serious topics is what makes some people detest their comfortable spaces and claims to social skill. This talk is thick, intense. It often divulges the limits of the private and the boundaries between bodies.

If salons are open to both men and women in many locales, their talk and their attention to body care highlight how even in mixed spaces the value of serious conversation as outside their bounds is restated.[32] Most men I interviewed, chatted with, or overheard saw salons as places for "small talk." They derided such conversation as "gossip" and discussions about "beauty and products" as frivolous. Some men even express a fear of such loose words as potentially dangerous, for they imagine, sometimes correctly, that salon discussion often chooses them as their subject. There seems to be a concern that talk about relations between men and women will end up introducing the girlfriend into what many men see as a relationship whose practices and problems should go unspoken. Of course in nearly all salons women do analyze and compare their experiences with men. And these might indeed have an effect on how they conceive of and work with their relationships to their husbands or fathers. This talk usually does not pretend to develop a line of action for the nation or the world in the way that café conversations often do. And so it appears to keep feminine issues enclosed, incapable of disrupting a certain sense of the "serious" business of the city. The curling and washing of hair, perusing the latest styles, engaging in the changes of appearances that is the main activity of salons is perceived as futily feminine and superficial pursuits by most men and some women.[33] These activities may include efforts to render self and style more legible. But as Gnawa Diffusion brought to our attention, for those who stand outside the door of this space, it can be a mysterious magnet for women's secrets and men's fantasies.

If the barbershop is, like the bordello, a place where all men might meet

and recognize their bodily similarity, the beauty salon might be seen as the place where all kinds of women go to develop their sense of difference. There debates about bodies and virtue are not those of an anonymous fraternity but of named, known people. In and around salons the emphasis on talk evidenced in so many accounts of civility remains, but here voices are muted and augmented with references to fame and special skills. They urge us to notice how mastering techniques of bodily transformation involves salons and beauty schools and relations among colleagues.

SKILLS AND VIRTUES

Casablanca, 1992. There's a brand new salon in the neighborhood. It is located on the main street of the area, you can see it every night, and its neon lights in pastel tones present an image of a man to one side, a woman to the other. As you walk past, the entire space lights up and sparkles like a rhinestone in the night. Both the women's and the men's sides have a large plate glass window, not the discrete, covered space seen in so many of the other salons in the area. So I decide I should visit. One afternoon I go in, ask for a haircut, and wait my turn. The salon is already pretty crowded, although it's only been working for a couple of weeks. With my entrance, a heated discussion takes form among several of the women working in the salon: Who should get this new client? Foreigners are reputed to be richer than locals, a preconception that is rarely based in fact, as this is a solidly upper-middle-class neighborhood. Finally, a woman asks me to change into a robe and have my hair washed. She spends a long time massaging my scalp, and tells me I need a cream to get the tangles out of my shoulder-length hair. Once the hair is clean, she combs it out. I listen to the radio, a series of Egyptian songs. The young woman brings me to a chair to have my hair trimmed. Samia will cut my hair. She smiles and tells me what a nice color my hair is. She wonders whether I'm not Egyptian. I laugh, wondering why she thought I was Egyptian. "Well," she says, "so many of the Egyptian actresses have blonde hair and blue eyes like you; and you have kind of an accent." I tell her I'm from California, a fact that seems of no interest to her. She really loves Egypt, she says, she reads all about the actresses and singers—especially the singers, because she loves music. She's never been to Cairo, she says, but she will travel there some day.

As we talk, we both watch the mirror. She is careful not to cut off too much hair. As I'm just getting a trim, it doesn't take too long, and soon, she is taking out her brushes to begin drying my hair. One of the sizes she needs is missing, and she has to borrow one from a colleague. The other woman is not happy about this, because she obviously wanted to be the one to style "the foreigner's" hair. In these first weeks, it seems that the hairdressers are trying to lengthen the list of "their" clients, and Samia looks like she's about to win over one of the more desirable new faces.

Samia begins to dry and style my hair, mouthing the words to the song on the radio. Suddenly, the other hairdresser appears behind us in the mirror. She frowns and tells Samia, "You're doing it all wrong, look, turn it like this, the other way." She grabs the brush from Samia, who has no choice but to let go if she wants to avoid pulling my hair. The other hairdresser proceeds to take over my head, frowning and reworking the areas that Samia has already curled. Is she the manager? How can she do this? I'm wondering to myself, when she says, "I'm so sorry that she was doing that to you, but we'll fix it up. Don't worry." She begins to show Samia how to do it "correctly." Her voice sounds like an elementary school teacher correcting lessons in grammar: How could you get it wrong? she seems to exclaim with each breath. Her hands move over my head insistently, she pulls and pushes my head and hair, as if to make me feel that my hair was all pointing in just the wrong direction. Her insistent tugs seem to say You can feel how right I am—how I know how to guide your hair, whereas that other one didn't.

Finally, the ordeal is over. My hair is shorter and fuller than when I entered. As I leave, I give a tip to all of those who have treated me. The last one, I still don't know her name, is still puffing, smiling too widely at me as though to say "Look, you'll know to come to me next time?" She seems to be the manager, or one of them. She takes my money and I leave, intending not to return.

Like the steps of the ballet dancer, a beautician's skills depend on coordinating certain moves. Skill is judged by the professional's ability to reproduce specific gestures, which lead to a regular, predictable result. The beautician's knowledge is demonstrated by his or her training, diploma, and manual skill. But the professional's attraction is augmented by knowing how to employ these skills in ways that keep in mind particular

faces and their relationship to sets of other eyes. We can observe this process most easily in beauty salons, but even when beauticians in Paris and Casablanca and Cairo provide services at home to avoid taxation or provide work for women who lack the certification or the means to open a "real" salon, this process is an integral aspect of their occupation.[34] One's reputation depends on gaining information about the kinds of people one routinely serves. Beauticians who cater to the rich and famous in their homes often operate salons for less illustrious, yet well-heeled clients. There, they hang photographs of "their" stars on the walls to demonstrate their links to fame. Each paying client can feel the touch of the talented hand that curled the hair of those stars.

All of those who wash and cut, curl and style hair, strip off leg hair, or pluck eyebrows must master physical gestures and ways of explaining them. Both involve extensive practice. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines practice as "To engage in frequently or usually. To do repeatedly in order to learn or perfect." Translated into French, *repeter* adds the sense of repetition to the gestures of practice. To insist on this aspect of beauty "culture" as a set of skills one learns through imitation draws our attention to the way that hairdressing and aesthetics involve training and traditions of learning. These are passed on practically—by means of example and through repetition. One need not be a specialist to master these techniques; nonetheless, one does not simply "pick them up" in the unconscious way in which Mauss suggests that body techniques are learned. Beauty skills involve a hand-to-hand passing down of traditions and secrets. This passing on is often perceived as problematic because of the fact that these expanding professions work to "form" an increasingly large number of girls and sometimes boys. Often, these young people have not been especially successful in school, but they are savvy enough to know that in the beauty professions they might not just earn their living but perhaps one day become their own boss. Managers and beauty school operators often voice particular concern about the kinds of girls they educate and employ. One director of a Casablanca beauty school was eager to explain that she sees herself as a kind of social worker. She described most of the girls at her school as being from underprivileged backgrounds; most had not completed high school. Yet, "in today's conditions, they need to work." As Homa Hoodfar writes about Cairo, "Tailoring and hairdressing were considered by most informants as occupations

suitable for women, but very few women were qualified enough to be considered skilled: top tailors and hairdressers in the neighborhoods were men. . . . The majority of these female tradespeople had turned a room of their flat into a workshop or rented a room in the neighborhood for their business. It was rare for these women to want to move out of their locality, where they were able to attend to their domestic responsibilities while they worked. At times, women would forgo the possibility of a bigger profit to work near their homes."[35]

In Paris too, beauty professions are often seen as a choice for girls and boys who lack the money or intellectual qualities to pursue advanced education. Martine explains why she became an aesthetician and her sister went into hairdressing; she attributes it to the "feminine" influence of her mother. "I enjoy working with my hands," Martine told me. "I was good at cooking, painting, and manual things and so I knew I would enjoy doing makeup and everything. My family didn't have money for me to go to the university, so I became a beautician." Malika in Casablanca said, "When I left school, I learned to sew. But I didn't like that job. I enjoyed fixing the hair of my little sisters; I spent my time braiding their hair. My father told me that if I didn't like sewing I could do something else, so I started to style hair. When my parents died and I got married, my husband wanted me to stop working but I refused since I had gotten used to my profession as a hairdresser."

Women and men who work as beauticians and aestheticians explain their choice of work in terms of pleasure, a need to earn a living, or a desire to develop their artistic skills; managers, like educators, tend to put the accent on their efforts to control the looks and movements of these apparently unruly elements. Concern for the style and looks of their employees is a major source of concern for beauty salon operators. It is relatively easy to provide a tasteful decor and pleasant setting in a salon, but because it is the relationship with the beautician and the result of his or her work that ultimately defines the "space," an often uneasy balance must be established between the kind of uniform "style" sought by the owner, and the art of the beauticians. The style of the salon extends, then, to the appearance and manner of people who work there. Monique surveys the comings and goings of her employees to get a "good idea of the kinds of people they hang around with." Halima, who owns a small salon in Casablanca, exercises strict control over the dress of her employees:

"Personally, I had an aesthetician who came to work in the hijab. I didn't accept that because the clients come to get made up and become pretty—how could she work with a scarf? In the profession of aesthetician, you must be presentable. You have to always be an example. For myself, I don't always set my hair, but I pull it back and I'm always made-up. Because when you're in the salon you must serve as an example."

The regularity of beauticians' looks are enforced by imposing uniform dress for employees. Often, this uniform matches the colors and decor of the salon itself. Managers pay careful attention to the activities of the employees in their salons as a central part of their role. The reputation of their workers might reflect back on them. They worry not only about how they look, but also how they act and with whom they associate on their lunch breaks. Their words echo a million discussions about how to turn these "poor girls" from "remainders" into efficient workers. For if processes of decomposing, examining, and reworking bodies are fairly easy to practice, the dangers of enlightenment are also on the minds of many. What happens when so many techniques for beautification, not to mention organizing competing businesses, are taught to girls from "who knows where"?

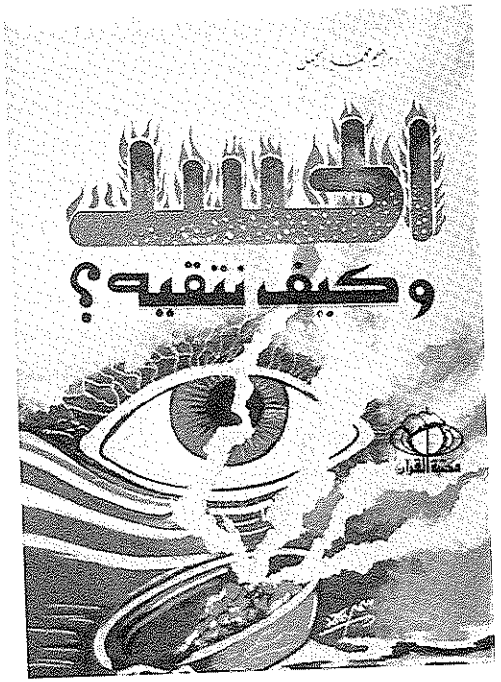
Noticing all of the arduous labor that goes into learning new practices brings us once more to think about the kinds of communities that sanction knowledge and virtues or enforce ways of walking. Indeed, to become a professional involves one in practices shared by a group of people one may never see. This shared world affects how professionals move and shape others. It inculcates habits in a way that is profoundly articulated with the ways that looks we notice or ignore can pave city streets and populate places we go. The measures of excellence that beauty instills are less like those of the habitus described by Mauss, than akin to the ways we learn to play music or master the processes of a specific cuisine. These skills take time to learn and to perfect. And they involve a more or less voluntary decision on the part of the person who practices them, defining practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definable to that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and good involved, are systematically

extended."[36] There is something about perfecting one's skills that can sharpen one's ability to learn about excellence in general. Knowledge of playing the guitar might be helpful if one wants to learn to play the sitar. Knowing how to cook French cuisine, be it *bourgeoise* or *populaire*, can, if we have mastered our art, enable us to think about food in a way that will help us to quickly assimilate the rules of Japanese or Mexican cuisine. Possibilities of acquiring specific skills are certainly limited by access to capital and level of education. But because techniques and their excellences are in constant change, a young girl "from nowhere" can truly be a threat to a comfortable, middle-aged salon owner—not simply because of a difference in social status or the possible threat of the young person's personal beauty, but because the mastery of skills itself points to potential for change. Mastery allows us to be aware of how the habits of the arts themselves offer clues to the eyes that matter in different social worlds.

To discern how the particularities of the beautician's art might teach us how to think about all manner of techniques, including ethnography, we might notice one major difference among the salons we have considered thus far.[37] Although talk is thick in all of them, the contemporary salon is unique in its plays on mirrored light. Old-time saloons often hung a mirror behind the bar for all to gaze at their mingling reflections; the beauty salon works in much more subtle ways with the central glass. It uses many prisms to illuminate faces with different combinations of rays. Are these not all a part of progress and lightening, democracy and equal rights for all? The distinct frequencies of light itself are difficult to identify if we simply notice the difference between foreground and background bodies out of context. But their rainbow colors become radiant once we set ourselves in any salon to notice what is beauty's central defining element.

MIRRORS AND REFLECTIONS

All clients, men and women, gaze at themselves in mirrors in beauty salons. But they do so at many moments, for many reasons, and in several ways. Plutarch wrote, "When you get up to leave the hairdresser's boutique, you place yourself in front of the mirror and you touch your head, examining the way in which the hair has been cut and the difference it has produced in the cut."[38] To concentrate too much on that specific moment of correspondence of reflection to desired result, that repetition of ges-



Envious eyes. When you look into the mirror you see yourself as if with another's eyes. You observe the beautician's eyes on you, and perhaps other eyes appear around your reflected image. This popular manual on jealousy and the "eye," published in Egypt, advises women on how to work with the eyes of others.

tures that reproduces an image of *copie conforme*, is perhaps to heed too naïvely the concurring discourses of men who do not wish to think of how this copying takes place over time, in front of others. Unlike the outdoor barber stalls for men that one can still find in the old medina of Casablanca, the salon does not use a handheld mirror simply to check whether the results of the haircut are adequate. Rather, the mirror participates in the entire process of elaborating a style. It intervenes to guide not only the movement of the eye, but that of the hand, not only the evaluation of the final product, but also discussions of the process that produces it. Clients catch glimpses of each other's treatments or meet each other's eyes in the mirror in the course of conversation. Words follow their glances, and these are used to bring absent, yet particular, others into the salon.

The plate glass mirror is a recent invention. Mirrors used to be forged in hammered copper or bronze and had to be handheld. The reflections they proposed were as uneven as the metals they were made of. Paintings of mirrors on ancient Egyptian implements and ancient Greek urns show women looking down into their mirrors, as if into pools of water. Like the

fountain in the hammam or the mosque, itself a reminder of the river's flowing, or the surging of well water (or the *'in*: the word for eye and that for source are the same in Arabic), mirrors might reflect, but their surface revelations also signal something more. Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux and Jean-Pierre Vernant suggest that in ancient Greece, "If mirrors are reserved for women it is due to their condition being defined by closure, even reclusion, and the face to face meeting with this thing that reflects back to them their own image illustrates this closure marvelously. As for alienation, there is no risk, since the woman is other by definition. She is already an object; she is, in the tradition that sees her ancestor as Pandora, materialized at birth, by her essence and her status."[39] At the same time that mirror gazing was associated with the frivolity of such contact, it might also point toward something as deep, mysterious, and profound as the source from which the water of Narcissus' river springs. Mirrors are dangerous: they exhibit our potential for self-enclosure, for anarchy, a flight into which might be neutralized and socialized by the mediation of other eyes. For the Greek citizen passing by another, to observe oneself meant catching the eye of an equal. Friends met in public formed the ideal mirrors by which to measure oneself. Indeed, it is perhaps by focusing on the agonistic implications of this gaze of equals that anthropologists have often conceived of ancient Greece and contemporary Mediterranean societies as being dominated by a preoccupation with reputation, associated with this "superficial" reflection of self in the eye of the other. For Greek men, staring into a mirror "presents a twofold danger. Danger of becoming closed into oneself, that would be fatal for the male individual like it is for Narcissus; for his vocation is in being open to others, to those like himself, and in socialization. Danger of alienation, in assimilating a reflection made by an object, engaging him in a quasi-reification."[40]

The image of Greek men debating in the Forum has been incredibly powerful for many modern thinkers. Scholars have engaged in all kinds of research concerning the nature of these interactions and their viability as models for our own thinking. We know of the Greeks' political and philosophical debates, of their sport and amorous adventures. We now pay attention to how citizens' exchanges in the polis presuppose their status as masters of the hidden world of the *oikos*, the enclosed world of women, children, and slaves, the world of production and reproduction from which evolved our understanding of "economy." But few philosophers

have been inspired to reconsider why the mirror was dangerous to political community. From what kind of envy or desire did the oikos require protection? What might enclosures have to do with how men saw one another in each other's eyes?

Even the most sophisticated versions of sight produced by Greek thinkers bear little resemblance to how we tend to think of this process today. David C. Lindberg explains that one school studying optics in the ancient world attributed sight to a kind of substance issuing from the eye to touch the thing seen, the extroversion theory. Others saw the thing observed as entering the eye through some mediating substance.[41] But both approaches involve the object of sight in some kind of mediated physical contact with the one seeing. To see the other is to share a special kind of touch with him or her. You touch with the radiant substance from your eye, or he or she enters you via the shared substance of vision. Looking at oneself in the mirror is thus an act of enclosure, not a process of enframing but a reaching out or entering of oneself. This reaching out involves not only people, but all natural objects. Avicenna, Al-Kindi, Robert Grosseteste, and Roger Bacon are only a few of the famous thinkers who played a role in developing Greek accounts of sight, leading eventually to the "modern" notion of light reflecting on the retina in the work of Kepler. The story of optics that Lindberg recounts offers us a glimpse of how the problem of the mirror is not simply a matter of reflected light, the issue of confinement not easily expressed in terms of spatial domains. Of course, it is Kepler's version of sight that "we" use to explain how we see. For us, eyes neither send out substances to touch objects nor allow shrunken things to enter them through the pupil. Today, sight as contact is definitively forgotten, or seen as a vestige of a primitive magic.[42]

It would seem that in the age of mechanical reproduction, the age of the world picture, of the domination of "empty" vistas of sight, only the heavy minds of social and cultural remainders could continue to speak of bodily radiation or being touched by the look of another. Mirrors, it seems, play a role in the disenchantment of the gaze and consequent precision of measurement and accuracy of representation. Richard Rorty writes, "Without the notion of mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself."[43] How he develops his thesis makes much of the idea of truth conceived in terms of correspondence and fidelity. These are important, of course, to stories of

en-lightening and the claims of bodies being able to be "anywhere." But our glimpses into salons show us how much more complex are our ways of using mirrors and reflections. They offer us new means of understanding our common world. Neither the dangers of self-examination for men nor the power of touch have faded over the years. This is apparent to me when I notice that men, even if they do have their hair done in the growing number of mixed salons in Paris or Casablanca, have little to say about these visits. Visiting salons encourages us to think about sociability not just in terms of the intensification of conversations, but also for what it does with silence, with a quiet exclusion of some not only from talk but from ways of transforming their bodies and the shape of their day. We should remember how the en-lightened body can act as a "third," as something held in common.[44] Noticing how masculinity is challenged by this third and the bodily similarities it implies might also lead us to understand how even the "thinnest" salon talk can involve tricks on manliness.

Becoming a beautician is often perceived as a particularly appropriate thing for a young girl, but everywhere, boys who choose this profession are viewed as lacking virile qualities. Work in salons does seem to attract more gay than straight men, perhaps in part because of the stigma of this profession that works on female bodies and involves much "small" talk. Even many heterosexual beauticians feel that in the salon they must relinquish signs of manliness. In Cairo and Casablanca, a significant number of male stylists are Christians or Jews; as "lesser" men, unable to legitimately marry Muslim girls, they might also present a face that associates them with Paris, the symbolic center of fashion. How one might play on such identifications was brought home to me when I accompanied my friend Souad to see George, her hairdresser. I met his employer, a woman of Greek origin who had been raised in Cairo. Souad explained to me that George was not Orthodox, like his boss, but an Egyptian Copt. But as Souad and I talked about my research with George, he made allusions to the festivities of the Aïd al ftr, talking about his and his family's preparations for the Muslim holiday. "But aren't you Christian?" asked Souad with surprise. "Of course not!" he replied. "I'm just George here because it's better for my professional progress. My real name is Mohammed." George/Mohammed explained that people in Egypt assumed it would be more risky for a male Muslim to touch women's hair. He also intimated

that people thought hairdressers weren't real men, even if they were Muslims. Perhaps his pseudonym helped him to keep things "straight" himself. To assure us of his sincerity, he talked about his wife and proudly showed us snapshots of his three children.

Many salons in Casablanca, some in Paris, and an increasing number in Cairo exclude men from their premises. But the moves toward different mixtures of male and female bodies are being made in different directions in each city. In Casablanca, most beauty salons are owned, operated, and patronized by women, but many of the upscale shops in the city centers employ male hairdressers.[45] These salons, some of which are Parisian franchises, are often perceived as closer to the centers of fashion than those located in neighborhoods, which are often characterized as closer to the center of personal concerns. Some women go to the stylish salon to get a cut, then move to the often inexpensive salon around the corner for regular washing and styling. We often find such practices in Paris, where the development of quick salons, the fast-food restaurants of the beauty world, are rapidly coming to predominate. I go into these different types of salon in more detail in the next chapter, but here, it is important to remark that these fast salons are always mixed. In Paris, neighborhood salons populated mainly by women tend to be associated with older ladies and outdated fashions, symbolized by their bubble hair dryers. In Casablanca, this is not the case, but a trend toward including more salons with less explicit boundaries between men and women is apparent. Men, it seems, are either taking over these feminine arenas of talk or, as many recent books and articles would lead us to believe, something is taking place that makes it more desirable to associate oneself with a certain version of the feminine.

As we move on toward Cairo, however, what in Casablanca seem self-evident divisions are put into question. There, male hairdressers clearly dominate all kinds of salons. This has not, however, been accompanied by the development of a mixed clientele. Although most beauty salons in Cairo employ men as hairdressers, many people see the recent "reveiling" of many women there as having brought about a change in attitudes about women's hair. Women who take the veil may indeed cease to go to the hairdresser at all, but many simply seek out salons where they will encounter only women. Dina's salon, for example, now has three separate rooms: one for hairdressing in general, one for aesthetic treatments, and

another for muhajibat, that is, women who have taken the veil and who want to be touched by or take off their head coverings only in front of female, often muhajibat, hairdressers. Asmah argues that this movement toward women-only salons has actually opened up employment opportunities for women as hairdressers, a profession previously occupied mainly by men: "When I first started, I had a hard time since people are used to male hairdressers. But now, with the quality of work I do, I've succeeded in making a name for myself among the well-known salons. I've also tried to encourage women to work in my salon."

The virtue of women and making a name for oneself as a beautician seem entangled in work that excludes the kind of reflective approach to knowledge that Rorty sees as symptomatic of modern philosophy. Salons participate in trying to work the body into the even, named, and numbered sections of schedules, charts, and maps. But they also force us to look into mirrors to carry out this labor. You may show a hairdresser a photograph of the way you'd like to have your hair done. But he or she shapes this and adds to it. This extra touch is a part of what you come to the salon to get. It is the result of the specialist's skill at playing with the image as you. His or her mediation adds to the reflection to explain what you are. And this extra touch is what distinguishes competent from extraordinary hairdressers or aestheticians. Gilles, who has a salon in Casablanca, explains that he learned the "touch" while working for the celebrated Jean-Louis des Forges: "Above all what I learned there was the 'touch.' A touch consists of chatting for five to fifteen minutes with a client in order to study her style, her colors, the texture of her hair before even covering her with the robe and wetting her hair. For example, if she has a prominent nose, you should thin the hair in the back. You also have to take into consideration the proportions of her body: *la coupe garçonne* (bob) with big hips and a small bust gives a woman a look like a bottle. An older woman with hard features and long black hair can resemble a vampire. You also have to take the client's profession into consideration. A nurse who takes off her cap from a shag cut ends up looking like an egg head."[46]

Knowing how and whom to touch brings to the fore a series of questions about the relationship of sight to picture to skill. The mirror of the beauty salon draws us to think about how what looks like a move away from messy combinations of sight and touch that produce unenlightened musings on personal qualities and the shame of contact with certain spe-

cific kinds of others might not be what modernity has wrought. This makes us more aware of how one can become the special client of a given hairdresser.

Delphine is just back from vacation. She comes into the salon smiling, tan, and energetic amid the midwinter paleness of the rest of us. I sit having my hair cut, and I watch her as she greets Stéphane, the manager, and one of the women in charge of washing hair takes her coat and helps her into her white robe. I lose sight of her as she moves toward the back of the room where the sinks are. I watch as Eric trims my hair—not much new here. I've had this cut for a while and so we don't have to talk about it much. Instead, we chat about how hard the winter has been, and he tells me he's planning to take off a couple of weeks in March to go to the Caribbean. Meanwhile, Delphine reappears in the mirror beside me. The entire wall is a glass, so I can watch her every move as she is seated, and her usual hairdresser, Marc, takes his place behind her. They exchange greetings, "It's been a long time," "How have you been," and all of that, and then he starts to move his fingers through her hair. What is it you'd like? he asks. Well, probably something like I have, Delphine responds. But Marc is skeptical: It's grown out badly, he remarks; I wonder if you don't really need to get another cut. Well, you know, Delphine adds shyly, I just had it done about three weeks ago while I was on vacation in L.A. My friends from the French cultural services there rave about this one hairdresser—I can't even remember his name, but I had him do it. Marc looks ever more skeptically at Delphine's hair. He stands above her, holding her midlength locks of damp hair between his fingers as his face takes on various expressions between hopelessness and disdain. "Well, yes, they must do things differently over there," he finally concludes. (At least that guy isn't down the street but twelve thousand kilometers away, at least she can't remember his name. And after all, that L.A. look is so glossy and brash anyway, why should he feel offended? She just wanted to see herself once that way—she'll return to her normal parisienne classicism, just you wait!) Delphine looks hurt, but of course, she'd expected this kind of reaction. All her friends loved the long shag and new highlights. They made her look just a bit exotic, they prolonged her sense that she had been somewhere, gotten out of the usual routine. She'd even bought some of those flashy "outfits" they wear over there—such a funny word, sounds like you're getting a boat ready to sail. Funny how so many of the designers there are European, but the clothes don't look quite the same under the bright sun.

But what was she going to do? I wondered. Would she give in to Marc's desire to remake her as she was, or at least redesign her as his?

"Let's try what I have, but just a little shorter," she finally says. So Marc begins to snip, to comb, as Delphine watches his moves in the mirror, commenting about everyone, and by the way she'd like to have the "bangs just a little more feathered" or he should "leave the back pretty long—I need some of that length." She tries to engage Marc in conversation about his life and the neighborhood, but his look of concentration, the way his eye remains intent on her hair, reveal the extent to which he feels challenged by how "his" client so blithely put herself in the hands of another. Granted, he's not as well-known as that, he only works in an upscale fast-salon, *a nicer example of the salon version of the fast food restaurant, but he pays attention to his clients. Delphine lives nearby and she always comes to see him. Like the other beauticians in the salon, he has his bevy of special clients whose color is carefully inscribed in personalized notebooks and whose cut he adapts to the lifestyle they describe to him during their sessions together.*

To understand beauty and salons, we cannot simply begin with the idea that the evenly lighted, valueless worlds of modernity render us indifferent, or should make us indifferent, to the touch of fame and personal relationships. Meaning is produced in these particular relationships in ways that are not akin to the see-saw between modernity's clear-headed gaze and the warm, sensuous tug of some background body. To understand salons, their talk and looks, we have to think about the ways in which issues of value infuse bodywork, nets of sight, and ways of naming. And this implies rethinking the idea that a mirror shows us not just our self, nor a means to produce copies, but can also bring any number of other eyes before or behind or across from our own. Mirror work might be basic to the simple realization of the ego, of the self as a separate being.[47] But we should notice how we construe this ego by recalling how the mirror itself came to be placed in our way. How its changes in size, position, or frame might not alter even the contours of what we take ourselves to be.

Mirrors, if well placed, can help us get a glimpse of the others who

make us what we want to be. Thus, they might help us to understand how and why the anywhere en-lightened body ekes out some place to live, some face to wear. In beauty salons, part of the process of talk and technique involves using mirrors to scrutinize the kinds of present, absent, or internalized others that matter to the kinds of beauty we will be. The art of the beautician includes the images the client verbalizes about spouse, relatives, and friends. These people have names; they belong to social worlds that the beautician must understand to be effective. But others present also take part in the production of looks. Glances and comments from the other women present sometimes play a part in making up other clients' faces according to what is known or imagined about these people. Paintings, photographs, ads too intervene in these exchanges. Glances, observations, and advice shape the way we ourselves come to look and think about ourselves.[48] And it is up to the beautician to move in sync with all of these to somehow embody the women's unique social place, to render visible who she is and where she hopes to go.

Beauticians take on the role of both seer and judge. They play before the mirror to establish their particular eyes as more farsighted than their colleagues' or competitors'. When the beautician and the client exchange glances via the mirror, they implicitly work on what is "good" for her. In front of the mirror in his Cairene salon André gives his version of mirror work: "When you see yourself in the mirror and notice that you are beautiful, this gives you a desire to live. Having a good hairstyle goes with wanting to be nicely dressed. This makes you another life, it makes you joyful. . . . God gave us beauty and we should continue to give beauty. Me, when I see a woman who is poorly arranged, I begin to draw her in my head—I imagine what has to be done to make her beautiful. I always like to learn from magazines and I also do my own creations to not simply copy these. I look at the woman's face, her style, and I talk to her a lot to get an idea of her personality and to try to give her what is best."

Look at how mirrors are set before each chair or encompass the entire room. Notice the looks of the other hairdresser-client couples around the room. Follow how the interplay of image, talk, and movement acts to create several frames: those of the mirrors that project images, those of salons, which also provide a primary closure, and those of the various areas in salons, which may or may not all revolve around the central glass.

Mirrors reflect whole worlds, each working with what seems to be a

similar body in very different ways. To play with Rorty's attention to the mirror and thought, let me suggest that we think about the looking glass not simply as a metaphor but as something that actually changes how we reflect on sight and goodness and how to think. To do this, I must shift to a new movement in this research. For if we want to begin to use salons to think about how techniques and virtues, practices and ideas of excellence transform our relations to ourselves, we have to show how they participate in fashioning society.

Although salons are indeed a kind of forum, their aim is not to produce equivalences but differences. They are called on to display and rework hierarchies of all kinds. They unveil bodies according to choreographies of relative value. They open out spaces where talk is possible among many, and close off areas where only one-on-one discussions with the aesthetician can take place. Beauticians promise to assist you in determining what it is you can be. To do this they must be able to imagine where you will go and what faces of others are important to you. Beauticians must work within the salon, but also be able to imagine absent others who may be essential to your look. This is how they can help you to find the faces you might hope to become. To establish the trust needed to do this, they ask you to join your vision to theirs. Expertise, conversation, friends and families, and anonymous bodies give form to beauties that engender new distinctions. These imply several kinds of closure and offer different vistas that make sense of others' eyes. As Gebauer and Wulf write:

> While modern rational thought refers to the single isolated cognitive subject, mimesis is always concerned with a relational network of more than one person: the mimetic production of a symbolic world refers to other worlds and to their creators and draws other persons into one's own world. As is apparent in this constellation, mimesis implies the recognition of mediation between worlds and people; it does not designate a subjection to received models, but rather an acceptance of traditions and the work of predecessors. It also implies a recognition of power: the inclusion of others introduces power, if only in symbolic terms, into one's own personal worlds, into the interpretive and perspectival modes developed there. The history of mimesis is a history of disputes over the power to make symbolic worlds, that is, the power to represent the self and others and interpret the world. To this extent

mimesis possesses a political dimension and is part of the history of power relations.[49]

The idea of point of view presupposes a shared field of vision. In this shared plane we might locate not the moment of realization of the already existing ego but a formative site where the emergence of self is traced on the ground of collective sights and emotions. To share different perspectives requires that we find common ground on this clearing. This is precisely what women who rage against the 'roubiya phenomenon are trying not to do. Their attempts to foreground themselves as examples of a specific "type" are attempts to stake a claim to modernity that others seem unable to take in stride. They, unlike those others, have not so much incorporated a specific way of walking but have learned to render themselves according to changing media. The issue, then, is not whether these women claim to make a "choice" of being modern or traditional; it is a question of how they display themselves as one or the other, when, and to whom. Could we consider the idea that different "worlds" they encounter shape our looks and values differently?

Several ways of arranging abstraction to intimacy, glances to conversations appear to be at work in beauty salons. These refer to processes of opening that imply not only distinct uses of salons, but different ways of walking out of them.[50] In a roundabout way, we now return to Mauss and his marvelous intuition: walking and the movies, walkers passing points of judgment in the street—these are the faces and the bodies that must be produced in salons. We must consider their arrangement and relationships so that we can understand how beauty salons structure new distinctions. We can begin to see the extent to which issues of social difference are profoundly linked to specific arrangements of significance. From thinking about how beauties reflect diverse landscapes, we can come to see how they also shape the lay of the land by the ways they travel over it.

4 ▪ STYLING DISTINCTIONS

Moving from Casablanca to Cairo and Paris is facilitated by the common epic of opening. We can follow its development to work with time and link it to types of people and kinds of places. The pervasive tale of moving out of the background makes us constantly aware of how a single name covers a variety of looks, and this similarity is often justified by the point at which that figure is said to have emerged in the course of lightening processes. And so I wonder why it is in heaviness itself, or the way we phrase tales of its forgetting, that we tend to locate the origin of differences we observe in beauties. Many people look at the heavy body, with its pull toward the earth, toward what might be termed local or cultural or particular, to seek clues to how mirrors propose distinctive ways of shaping, clipping, or coloring our modern heads. The epics we increasingly share throughout the world encourage this kind of movement of to and fro. Yet, by moving through beauties, then into salons, I noticed how other movements might in fact upstage the interplay of heavy and light. Just as being attentive to how a common name identifies bodies that look very different raises suspicions about the way en-lightenment stories dominate our conversation, salon talk and beauticians' ways of producing beauties produce variations that are not apparent in the way we group them under a single appellation. Diversity among them might be stated according to their location, their language, or their price. But perhaps neither these nor a simple contrast of particular to general can explain the ways that different kinds of salons take form. To label a salon as typical of Casablancan or urban, Cairene or elite culture is imprecise. To recognize significant differences among salons we must explain how they play out