The Art of Maquis:

Makeup and Making up in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Senanta Fanidh Sanogo

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Supervised By Dr Divine Fuh

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This thesis/dissertation has been submitted to the Turnitin module (or equivalent similarity and originality checking software) and I confirm that my supervisor has seen my report and concerns revealed by such have been resolved with my supervisor.

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Abstract

This story is about the art of maquis among women in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The thesis frames the art of maquis as a navigational technique through which women embody their aspirational self. Here, I conceptualize the art of maquis through the notions of makeup and making up. The women I worked with used makeup framed as a concept and a practice, where making up is considered the practice through which the art of maquis is performed. Here, the tools women employ to beautify their lives are discussed in terms of technologies of visibility and behavioural techniques such as *flatter* [to flatter]. This monograph examines how women constantly navigate opportunities by embodying their aspirations and intersubjectivity through an ethnographic analysis of makeup and making up practices in a maquis [local pub]. To navigating precarious conditions and the materiality of the contexts, the women I worked with used makeup for pragmatic reasons, often to access aspirations in the form of socio-economic capital (making up). Experts at the art of maquis (makeup and making up), these women use their bodily capital and technologies of visibility to attract and navigate opportunities in a world where they find themselves at the margins of global capitalism. Ultimately, focusing on eye and skin makeup, this ethnography of facial and behavioural adornment showcases how people aspire to be happy through technologies of visibility and the presentation of self in everyday life. The thesis suggests that studying adornment techniques from and through the maquis provides a nuanced way of theorizing the kaleidoscopic epistemologies informing gender constructions, contemporary beauty ideals and female agency in Ouagadougou.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Summary

This chapter introduces the fundamental question and ideas sculpting this thesis. By exploring the thesis' conceptual and theoretical backbone, the chapter sheds light on the relevance of studying the art of maquis in a context where African aesthetics and womanhood have been exoticised and homogenised in previous literature (Lugones, 2016; Schrock, 2013; Nuttall, 2006; Oyěwùmí, 1997; Visweswaran, 1997). In that regard, core concepts used locally during my fieldwork such as the maquis, non-lotis, makeup and making up are discussed along with theoretical ideas on intersubjectivity, precarity, womanhood, domesticated agency, and heterotopias. The art of maquis is presented as a metaphorical lens for understanding the process through which women conceal and reveal aspects of their faces or lives to access opportunities. This chapter makes a case for an anthropological enquiry on the navigational techniques women in Ouagadougou employ to adorn their faces and lives.

1.2. Research question

Figure 1. The maquis woman's face.

This thesis's central question is: How do women use facial and navigational adornment techniques to access opportunities in Ouagadougou?

The initial research aim was to explore the resistance of femininity ideals in Ouagadougou by examining the dynamism and Spatio-temporality of those ideals, along with emergent agentive responses. After spending a week in the field, I became curious about how waitresses in the maquis used technologies such as eyeshadows, *tatouage* [Black henna], and skin lightening to navigate and access opportunities in the maquis [Local pub]. The research focus became clearer when Nafissatou, my first research participant (see subsection 1.4 for field entry details), introduced me to Safi, a 36-year-old woman who worked in a maquis as a waitress. Seated on a plastic chair in Safi's living room, I watched her get ready for work with perplexity. Covered with a cloth around her waist and a bra, she faced her small rectangular mirror by the doorway, next to her small flat-screen TV sprinkled with a thin layer of harmattan dust. Still facing her mirror, she applied a lotion labelled *Jaune d'oeuf* [Egg yolk], first, on her face, then on her arms. Right after, she put on a polo shirt and tightened the cloth around her waist so that one could only see her protruding round stomach and her high waist. Unlike her colleagues at the maquis, she wore no facial makeup[1] and claimed to have no interest in other technologies that made one "shine" like the brown-skinned women with blue eye shadows painted on the

[1] Throughout the thesis, makeup and adornment are used synonymously.

maquis' walls (see figure 1). Thus, using the maquis as a heuristic device, this research focussed on exploring how women navigated the politics of visibility in Ouagadougou.

This thesis intends to contribute to broader discussions around Global South cities, facial adornment, and post-colonial female subjectivities. The research addresses the knowledge gap around intricate networks made visible through adornment techniques employed by Burkinabe women in the pursuit of a beautiful life. Theorizing the role makeup techniques play in women's lives across nuanced urbanscapes sheds light on the kaleidoscopic epistemologies informing gender constructions, contemporary beauty ideals and female agency in Ouagadougou. Ultimately, thinking about this question from and through the maquis, an understudied site of knowledge production, provides unique ways to understand morphing female ontologies. Moreover, as the chapter highlights, most of the literature on adornment practices exoticizes 'ethnic' groups in the Global South. This research attempts to avoid the rampant historicity that Mbembe (2002), Hountondji (2000), and Salo (2010) bring to the attention of social scientists. The focus on current facial adornment techniques used by women in Ouagadougou creates an alternative for thinking about the close link between social navigation and facial adornment in post-colonial contexts.

1.3. Thesis conceptual Framework

1.3.1. The Art of maquis: Thinking through and from the Maquis

'Art lies in concealing art'_ Horace

In his book, *Sprezzatura: Concealing the Effort of Art from Aristotle to Duchamp,* Paolo D'Angelo, philosopher of art, reconstructs the history of art concealment through an elaborate discussion on the paradoxical nature of contemporary aesthetics. D'Angelo (2018) remarks that the dissimulation of efforts involved in making and performing art reveals the essence of art itself, that is, to display an elegant and seemingly effortless product. He posits that "This kind of dissimulation is required of a dancer as well: it is not good if her face shows a grimace from

fatigue or pain, as everything must appear effortlessly, lightly, smoothly, and naturally performed. Moreover, we could say the same about a painter, a writer, or a poet" (D'Angelo, 2018:15). Similarly, the art of maquis points to how people embody and navigate the hardships of life through concealment and dissimulation to access opportunities that would beautify their lives.

Maquis is a French word initially employed to describe a bush assimilated with the vegetation found where the French guerrillas hid during the second world war to resist the German rule in France. After the second world war, the word became a famous label for guerrilla resistance movements in francophone countries such as Cameroon (Mbembe, 1996). Today, maquis are famous open-air or enclosed pubs, present in post-independent francophone countries, particularly Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. Though some expensive Ouagalese maquis exist in affluent streets like Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, maquis has the reputation of being affordable compared to other restaurants or nightclubs, thereby being more appealing to the Burkinabe working class. Often mentioned in scholarly texts (Guigma, 2019; Sarr, 2016; Newell, 2009; De Boeck and Plissart, 2004; Chernoff, 2003; Gondola, 2016), maquis have rarely been the primary site of ethnographic inquiry. Regardless of the post-independence readaptation of the word maquis, this notion of concealment and resistance portrayed through the initial meaning of the term is still relevant to Burkinabe maquis as they are spaces that both conceal and reveal dogmatic ways of being.

Figure 2. Picture taken from a kiosk, approximately 15 metres opposite the maquis *Le navire de la cité*.

In post-independence Ouagadougou, maquis are also spaces where otherwise concealed phenomena, such as extramarital relationships and 'promiscuous' makeup, are revealed. As the manager of the maquis I worked in mentioned, the maquis is a place of "*Ordre et désordre*" [order and chaos] (Fieldnotes, 25th December 2020, Ouagadougou). This notion of

simultaneous "*Ordre et désordre*" can be unpacked using Foucault's concept of heterotopia. In the precariousness and uncertainty of Zongo, the maquis, as a heterotopia, designates another world inside an everyday world, mirroring yet upsetting the other. Figure 2 shows a picture of the maquis in Zongo, *Le navire de la cité* [the city's ship], I took while taking breakfast in a kiosk opposite the maquis. As observed on the maquis' long turquoise walls (right behind the water tower on the right), the vivid paintings of women with blue eyeshadows, brown skin, and TV antenna create a striking contrast with the mud and non cemented brick houses around it. Maquis, like heterotopias, are spaces haunted by fantasy, reflecting and upsetting dogmatic norms. Foucault (1984:3) argues that these spaces "have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect". Faithful to their heterotopic characteristic, maquis are places of 'im-possibility', that is, places of paradox where it is possible to live and imagine all the contradictory categories at the same time, thereby transcending these same contradictions, even if just for a moment (De Boeck and Plissart, 2004). In the maquis *Le Navire de la Cite,* this notion of *order et desordre* manifested in nuanced ways. For instance, although it was a space where sexual promiscuity was tolerated and sometimes encouraged, the manager of the maquis often worried about the maquis' reputation when a waitress left the maquis with a client in the middle of her shift. Considering the maquis as a site of order and chaos makes it a perfect lens for examining the art of makeup and making up. Using the maquis as an analytical lens outside of its spatial limits provides an opportunity to observe and study intimate realms of action that are otherwise carefully concealed in everyday interactions. It is an epistemology of *order and chaos*, thereby giving the ethnographer a backstage ticket to performances on the art of maquis in Ouagadougou. As a particular form of social navigation (Vigh, 2006), an ethnography of the art of maquis provides critical data on how women in Ouagadougou use concealment techniques to beautify their lives. The women I worked with used makeup framed as technologies of visibility (Thomas, 2020) and making up through techniques such as *flatter (further discussed in chapter 4)* to access opportunities. Just as the Morre[2] word for makeup, *Nagam*, literally translates to *making oneself beautiful*, the art of maquis is the practice of making oneself and one's life beautiful. It is an aesthetic of existence that maximizes beauty in one's life through specific

[2] Local language of the Mossi people, a predominant ethnic group in Ouagadougou.

techniques and technologies. This research seeks to examine how women, as maquis artists in their own right, use these techniques and technologies to embody their aspirational self, thereby revealing their ontological malleability.

1.3.2. Makeup and Making up

The thesis conceptualises the art of maquis through the notions of makeup and making up. Here, makeup represents technologies[3]of visibility, tools women use "to attract favourable attention and enhance their appearances" (Thomas, 2020:20), and *Nagam*, a navigational technique employed to access beauty by concealing aspects of one's face, be it temporarily or permanently. Making up is framed as a concealment process employed beyond facial makeup. It is a social navigation technique, aiding in beautifying both the face and social relations. By concealing certain aspects of their face or subjectivity, women in Ouagadougou accessed opportunities in the form of respectability or financial capital. This monograph will demonstrate that although makeup and making up practices are often nuanced, they both serve a common purpose: to make oneself and one's life beautiful regardless of socioeconomic uncertainties. Undeniably, a close study of women's relationship with makeup reveals how women, as maquis artists, want to be perceived. Through makeup, women construct new ontologies and ways of relating by concealing former ways of being, aligning physiology and behaviour with their aspirations. By being transparent or opaque to makeup, the women I worked with created new realities through concealment, thereby making up. In discussing how women in Ouagadougou morph their ontologies to access their aspirations, this research suggests a pathway for theorising contemporary adornment practices.

The historical register of beauty and adornment in Africa comprises positivist ethnographic accounts and exotic art history (Nuttall, 2006). Although the 1970s witnessed the emergence of the idea that complex philosophies of aesthetics are portrayed through African sculptures (Thompson, 1974; D'Azevedo, 2006), this knowledge was plagued with connoisseurship characterised by the ability to single out an 'ethnic group' style in search for an imagined cultural authenticity, leaving a void for contemporary understanding of African aesthetics

[3] In his renowned 1982 seminar concerning technologies of the self, Foucault describes a Maussian perspective of the word technology as being concerned with elementary types of technology that are rendered visible through techniques of the body or technologies of the self, rather than an affinity for electronic devices (Foucault, 1988).

(Nuttall, ibid.). This research addresses this gap by showing how women in a specific spatiotemporality leverage facial adornment techniques to access opportunities.

Comaroff (1980:6) points out:

> "The relationship between the human body and social collectivity is a critical dimension of consciousness in all societies...it is a truism that the body is the tangible frame of selfhood in individual and collective experience, providing a constellation of physical signs with the potential for signifying the relations of persons to their contexts".

By adorning their bodies, women produced knowledge about their socioeconomic aspirations and collective constructs of beauty and happiness. This idea concurs with Turner's (2012:486) argument that:

> "The surface of the body, as the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psycho-biological individual; becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialisation is enacted, and bodily adornment (in all its culturally multifarious forms, from body-painting to clothing and from feather head-dresses to cosmetics) becomes the language through which it is expressed".

Even Though contemporary Anthropologists have acknowledged the importance of studying the psychophysiology of adornment techniques, little to no research has been done on the contemporary aesthetics of existence in Burkina Faso. Many of the women I worked with considered facial makeup a critical aspect of producing knowledge about the self. As Ela, a research participant articulates:

> *"When you put makeup and dress up, they already see your image"* (Fieldwork interview with Ela, 6th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

This "image" Ela referred to is an ontological mould shaped by technologies of visibility or adornment techniques in Ouagadougou. Due to the unanimous belief that eyes, and the skin are the most important part of the face to makeup, this thesis focuses on eye and skin makeup.

Thus, makeup could be approached as an epistemic tool that morphs one's way of making up or getting by.

1.4. Research Site and Field Entry: Zongo, Non-lotis

In Ouagadougou, like in several francophone African cities, French colonial powers used topography, accurate, or imagined, to symbolise the unequal distribution of wealth and power, with only a few 'westernised' African elites living in the city (Fouchard, 2001; Winters, 1982). During the colonial period, a grid plan was introduced as part of the French *mission civilisatrice* [civilising mission]. Inspired by Western urban aesthetics, this grid plan facilitated the binary categorisation of the city's urbanscape into *loti* and *non-loti*, the Burkinabe equivalent of formal and informal, legal and illegal binaries (Fournet, Nikiema and Salem, 2008). Little of this urban planning model changed after independence (Robineau, 2013; Jaglin, 1995). After Burkina Faso gained independence in 1960, Ouagadougou witnessed rapid demographic growth because the city was perceived as a place to seek opportunities for social mobility. This sharp expansion in the metropolitan populace prompted a backlog of housing supply relative to demand (Osmont, 1995), forcing many families to build mud houses at the margins of *lotis* zones. Today, the *non-loti* represents a middle ground between uncertainty and stability. With the financial and logistical difficulties faced by the city to provide stable and affordable housing for all citizens, some *non-loti* areas such as Zongo, my primary research site, are over twenty years old. Situated in district number 8 of Ouagadougou, the 2018-2022 District Development Plan Report describes Zongo as a peripheral district resulting from the city's recent sprawl (GEDES, 2018). The report states that this "underdeveloped" neighbouring municipality, which is part of the peri-urban ring of the city, is under both land and demographic pressure from the urban centre. Although Zongo's informal status positions the area as an "Altermodernity" (Chenal et al., 2009), underdeveloped and undesirable, De Boeck et al. (2009) argue that processes of identity-formation and positioning regarding issues of modernisation and globalisation often find their most poignant expressions in these urban zones. Regardless of being invisible on the official city maps, Zongo is recognised by authorities and town officials who take advantage of the informality of *non-lotis* zones to generate land rents by bypassing the allocation procedures of parcels. This mismanagement of

land allocation and plotting has only worsened precarious living conditions in *non-lotis*, maintaining a geographical class division between *loti* and *non-loti* zones of the city. Indeed, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography in Burkina Faso, *nonlotis* inhabitants are three times more likely to be below the poverty line than inhabitants of *lotis* zones (Guigma, 2019; Ouattara and Some, 2009).

Upon arrival in Ouagadougou, I searched for entry points in Zongo and other potential areas where I could conduct my fieldwork through community-based associations. After several dead ends, I decided to take a trip to Zongo on my own. At the time, I knew Zongo was somewhere on the national route number 1 (N1), but I had a very vague idea of Zongo's liminal geography. The following account of my first interaction with the field highlight the urban politics of visibility in Ouagadougou and my positionality within the city, which will be discussed further throughout the chapter.

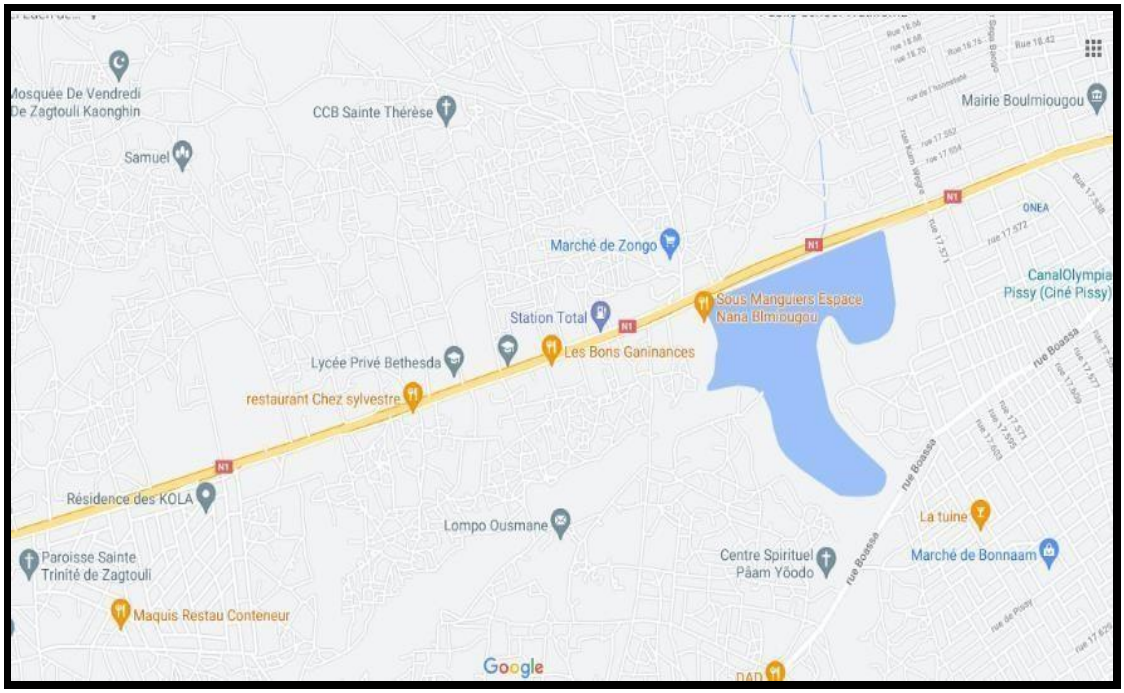

Figure 3. (Google maps, 2021) Showing the Zongo on the left, after the bridge, and Pissy, on the right (visible grid plan).

It was a sunny, harmattan afternoon, and the N1 road was relatively serene, with only a few motorbikes, bicycles, and travelling vehicles moving in and out of town. I later observed that that afternoon's serenity only lasted from Monday to Friday. During the week, many people left Zongo early in the morning for work in the city centre and only returned in the evening. On weekends, the roads were adorned with busy drivers clothed with their shiniest outfits and

makeup, moving to and from wedding or christening ceremonies. As I drove towards Ouagadougou's exit, I realized that I rarely drove past the bridge overseeing the Boulmiougou district dam, which aliments the adjacent urban cropland (figure 3). I briefly glanced at the farmers on the fields and realized I had no idea where to go after the bridge. Before leaving my parents' home in Pissy, on the opposite side of the bridge, I made peace with the possibility of getting lost after realizing I could not rely on google maps for clear directions to specific locations in Zongo due to the area's invisibility as a result of its *non-loti* status. A few meters after the bridge, there was a vibrant, colourful market, along with small kiosks operating as restaurants, repair shops, barbershops, and telephone centres. People walked and worked hastily on both sides of the road as though they were rhythmically racing along with the moving cars. It was the Zongo market. After a 15-minute ride trying to decide where to stop, I finally decided to stop at a kiosk by the roadside. After carefully parking my motorbike under a nearby tree's shade, I greeted the kiosk's owner, a brown-skinned woman wearing wax print fabric. I pulled out one of the metal stools at the counter, sat down, and ordered a bottle of coke. Nafissatou, the kiosk owner, seemed a little indifferent about my presence at first but got very curious when I asked her whether we were in Zongo. Surprised by my question, she replied*: "No, here is we call it Zagtouli cemetery!".* With a perplexed tone, she continued: *"You, where are you from, and you don't know Zongo?".* According to Nafissatou, Zongo was behind us, closer to the market I passed on my way. Zagtouli cemetery, just like Zongo, was invisible on formal urban maps but existing as a real, liminal space between Zongo and the village of Zagtouli situated about 5 kilometres ahead. I had unknowingly driven past Zongo as though it were truly invisible, cast in darkness. In that light, the (in)visibility of Zongo was subjective, dependent on who was looking. Luckily, my strange sense of orientation was a great conversation starter. I later found out that Nafissatou was a Zongo resident. She introduced me to Safi, my first research participant in the maquis, as mentioned in the introduction.

1.5. The Women of this Thesis

Based on the research participants' formulation of gender, this thesis considers a heteronormative approach to gender. Here, *gender* is defined as "an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women" (Manuel, 2014; Ridgeway and Correll 2004: 510). This thesis draws from data collected through interactions with 10 women between the ages of 20 to 40 in Ouagadougou

via interviews, informal group conversations, and participant observation. Among the 10 women, 3 worked as makeup artists and resided in *loti* zones, 3 worked in the maquis as waitresses, and 4 worked as petty traders, all residing in the Zongo *non-loti*. This research's focus on women is a political and personal choice, addressing the problematic metanarrative around African women's experiences. Feminists of colour such as Mohanty, Spivak, and Ong have challenged the global sisterhood's notion of "woman" as a universal marker of identity, which informs homogenous narratives of development (Mohanty, 1991; Ong, 1988; Spivak, 1988).

Additionally, Schrock (2013) and many other feminist scholars have expressed the dangers of assuming a universal experience of women, separating the woman's body from its context (Visweswaran, 1997; Abu-lughod, 1991). This obsession with isolating the African woman's body and experience from its context can be attributed to the universalization of the female body. Based on these observations, this thesis aims at contributing to a body of knowledge produced by African women about their own nuanced experiences in a frequently oversimplified world.

1.6. Theoretical framework

To explore the affective dimensions of makeup and making up among women in Ouagadougou, a theoretical discussion on subjectivity, agency, bodily capital, precarity, and social navigation is necessary. This section describes the theoretical framework used throughout the thesis to examine how women use makeup to beautify their lives (making up) based on their capacity to aspire.

1.6.1. Subjectivity, Self-Constitution and Intersubjectivity

Although the identification of the self (the body) with consciousness was famously introduced by French philosopher Rene Descartes, the word subject itself infiltrated the franca lingua of modern philosophy through Immanuel Kant. However, as a response to Descartes' dualism of the mind and body, Foucault advocated for the analysis of subjects, not only as embodiments of processes of the mind but also as active actors in constructing their own subjectivity through self-constitution (Kelly, 2013). In that way, the Foucauldian view on subjectivity enables social

analysis to transcend from the mind versus body cartesian view of the subject to a more nuanced understanding of postmodern ontologies. In Foucault's opinion, the self-constitution of a subject includes techniques and technologies through which subjects actively construct themselves. As such, the subject "is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself" (Kelly, 2013:514). Reflecting on the ancient Greek depiction of ethics of the self as a way in which individuals are supposed to constitute themselves as moral subjects of their actions, he affirms that "Ethical self-constitution thus takes place in relation to a moral code, but is itself something completely different" (Kelly, 2013:517). To contextualize the notion of this relational ontological split between the body and the selfconstitution to postcolonial moral codes, I use Nyamnjoh's (2002) critique of the prevalent individualism in western understanding of subjects to suggest that the women I worked with constructed their subjectivity based on their intersubjectivity. Nyamnjoh (2002) posits that subjectivity ought to be studied in terms of intersubjectivity and interdependence to capture a glimpse of postcolonial experiences accurately. Furthermore, as the thesis' interest lies in understanding the affective dimension of technologies of visibility in Ouagadougou,

Bourdieu's ideas on bodily capital and Foucault's conception of self-constitution will equally be used to discuss the psychobiological manifestations of these technologies in women's lives, as they navigate intersubjectivity and interdependence in Ouagadougou.

1.6.2. Agency and Domesticated Agency

Undoubtedly, many African countries currently find themselves in a context marked by rapid social transformation, a common characteristic of several post colonies (Mbembe, 2008; Salo, 2010). This rapid social transformation is fuelled by divergent and dynamic epistemologies resulting from multiculturalism, globalisation, modernisation, and other processes facilitating global cultural flows (Appadurai, 1996). Emirbayer and Mische's reflective article on the nature of agency remains useful in deconstructing some aspects of agency easily ignored in ethnographic analysis. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) heavily rely on George Hebert Mead's attempt to position the human agency as actions embedded in different temporalities. Indeed, Mead conceptualises agency as the positioning of actors within a historical passage, which includes the ongoing reconstruction of their orientations toward the past and future with emergent events (Mead and Murphy, 1932). In that light, Emibayer and Mische (1998) suggest different temporal orientations of agency, examining forms of actions oriented toward the past,

the future, and the present. Going further into this chordal triad of agency, they identify three elements of agency. The third element is exhibited in memory and in the historical apparatus that extends memory, creating culturally and psychologically rooted predispositions that contribute to the reproduction of social structures. The second analytical category of agency suggested by Emirbayer and Mische is projectivity. This category entails the imaginative generation of possible future trajectories of action in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured to align with actors' hope or fears for the future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The projective dimension of agency focuses on how agentic processes shape future possibilities or aspirations. Mead (1932) characterises this as a distance experience. Indeed, actors move beyond themselves into the future. Conscious of the spatiotemporal dimension of agency, Nyamnjoh (2002) discusses agency in terms of interdependence and intersubjectivity.

Consequently, he suggests the concept of domesticated agency, which plays a critical role in how women conceal or reveal aspects of their subjectivity to sustain conviviality in an environment of heightened interdependence. Subjects of a society can use this tamed agency to pursue their interests while remaining members of the accepted symbolic organisation they ascribe to. As chapters 3 and 4 will indicate, domesticated agency is intimately linked to individuals' capacity to aspire and respectability.

1.6.3. Bodily Capital

Capital is the word Pierre Bourdieu uses to describe the socially valued goods we all desire and strive to attain, such as money or status. His definition of social capital is founded on the following realisations: first, capital is more than just economic; second, social exchanges are more than just self-interested; and finally, they must include "capital and profit in all their forms" (Bourdieu, 1986: 241). While Economics accounts for only monetary investments and profit, it rarely considers the different proportions of the resources that different agents or social classes allocate to economic and cultural investments (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's theory of capital argues that capital is the currency that grants access to a higher status in society, portraying cultural capital as embodied qualities of the mind and the body. This thesis provides a nuanced understanding of how femininity and bodily capital work in Ouagadougou from the maquis. As mentioned earlier, the common frontier of society, the social self (often expressed

through a domesticated agency), and "the psychobiological self become the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialisation is enacted, and bodily adornment becomes the language through which it is expressed" (Turner, 1980:486). Considering both technologies of the self and bodily capital as analytical frameworks provide tools to evaluate the psychobiological knowledge the women I worked with leveraged as a way of making up, thereby beautifying their bodies and lives.

1.6.4. Precarity and Social Navigation

Although the term precarity was formerly used to describe insecure labour conditions, this political neologism has been contextualised by contemporary scholars to explore a general state of socio-cultural and economic instability (Neilson, 2015; Lee and Kofman, 2012; Butler, 2012; Allison, 2012; Waite, 2009). This thesis draws on the contemporary understanding of precarity as an analytical framework to unpack women's capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004). A study of present-day makeup culture reveals how sedimented traditions and aspirations are embodied to constitute contemporary female ontologies by being a conversation between ingrained customs and aspirations. As mentioned above, aside from being at the margin of global cultural flows, being inhabitants of a *non-lotis* area in Ouagadougou meant that most of the women I worked with were three times more likely to be below the 'poverty line' than inhabitants of *lotis* zones (Guigma, 2019; Ouattara and Some, 2009). Uncertainty being one of the main offsprings of this precarious environment, Vigh's (2006) concept of social navigation will help theorise and analyse making up practices. Social navigation conjures up images of troubled waters, abrupt movements, and a staccato beat (Archambault, 2017; Hoffman and Lubkemann, 2005). Ironically, the name of the maquis where I conducted this research was *The Ship of the City,* a convenient metaphor for a study of social navigation techniques.

1.7. Chapter outline

In this chapter, the conceptual, historical, and theoretical apparatus of the art of maquis was discussed. By introducing the analytical framework of the thesis, the chapter set the pace for a broader discussion on ways of making up among women in Ouagadougou. The second chapter, *Sitting in the Dark with Glimpses of Light*, addresses the epistemic backbone of the thesis. Through a discussion on the research methodology, the chapter expands on the notion of sitting in the dark by positioning Edouard Glissant's concept of opacity and Francis Nyamnjoh's notion of incompleteness as important methodological frameworks for doing ethnography in the global south. Considering my positionality as both a native female ethnographer and a frontier African (Nyamnjoh, 2017), the chapter equally highlights the ethical implications of conducting ethnography at home through notions of strangeness (Ahmed, 2000) and epistemic translation (Hanks and Severi, 2014). Broadly drawing from the works of philosophers, anthropologists, and historians such as Glissant (1990), Stacey (1988), and Thomas (2020), this chapter provides details on the epistemological and ethical underpinnings of this ethnography. Chapter 3, *Makeup and Making up the Face*, explores how the women I worked with used makeup as a facial adornment technique to navigate opportunities and aspirations as social and financial capital. Drawing inspiration from 'The Modern Girl' as a global heuristic device, the chapter uses the image of the maquis girl (see figure 1) to explore contemporary Burkinabe notions of modern femininity. Further focussing on the notion of makeup as *Nagam* [making oneself beautiful], the chapter examines how women, as maquis artists, use the art of maquis by leveraging their domesticated agency (Nyamnjoh, 2002), morphing their facial features in ways that mirror their aspirations. Presenting skin lightening, eyeliner, and eyelash extensions as technologies of visibility (Thomas, 2020), the chapter briefly engages with how women tap into their bodily capital (Bourdieu, 1984) to beautify their lives as they adorn their faces. Here, it is argued that by choosing to makeup (or not) their skin and eyes, women in Ouagadougou navigate respectability and belonging in a society where intersubjectivity is crucial for survival. Chapter 4, *Makeup and Making up in the Maquis*, provides an in-depth analysis of the chaotic and ordered nature of the art of maquis through a depiction of how maquis waitresses, as maquis artists par excellence, navigate their precarious work environment to satisfy both maquis clients and their aspirations. By exploring the affective dimensions of the art of maquis in those women's lives, this last chapter examines the different techniques the women I worked with used to make up their lives and sustain relationships in the maquis. Based on their navigational

capacity, they use *flatter* [to flatter], among other making up techniques, to beautify their lives. Ultimately, the chapter shows that at its core, making up is a technique used for pragmatic reasons by maquis artists to get by.

In chapter 5, the concluding chapter, I suggest that the art of maquis could be used as an analytical framework to capture the dynamism and nuances of post-colonial female subjectivities, thereby rejecting the way too popular homogenous imagination of African women.

Chapter 2: Methodology: Sitting in the Dark with Glimpses of Light

2.1. Summary

This chapter addresses the thesis' empirical and ethical foundation. Here, the idea of sitting in the dark with glimpses of light is juxtaposed with Edouard Glissant's concept of opacity and Francis Nyamnjoh's conception of incompleteness to advocate for the consideration of the inherently incomplete nature of knowledge in conducting ethnography. The chapter also emphasizes the ethical implications of ethnography at home through notions of strangerness and epistemic translation, considering my positionality as a native female ethnographer. Finally, drawing from field notes, observations and interviews, this section of the thesis reflects on how my class positionality and positionality within the maquis may have influenced the data collected.

2.2. Introduction

For this research, conducting an ethnography was the most suitable mode of data collection as the goal was to capture the everyday portrayal of the art of maquis in the lives of women in Ouagadougou. As Ross (2010:9) posits, "In its attentiveness to social life, ethnography offers the tools for a careful, sensitive and sensible assessment of people's lives and contexts". Using ethnography as a research methodology in post-colonial contexts becomes critical since capturing the dynamism of the everchanging ways of knowing and being through a deductive rather than an inductive process facilitates historicity (Mbembe, 2002). Although the primary method of this research was inspired by Geertz's (1973) 'deep hanging out' technique, specifically dwelling on diurnal participant observation and semi-structured interviews,

Tedlock's (1991) suggestion to change the term 'participant observation' to 'observant participation' was equally considered in order to challenge the underlying supposition that research participants are passive objects to be observed. This proposition equally acknowledges native researchers who are insiders researching their communities.

Sitting in the Dark with Glimpses of Light represents the epistemic DNA of this thesis. The chapter further expands on the notion of *sitting in the dark* by positioning Edouard Glissant's

concept of opacity and Francis Nyamnjoh's notion of incompleteness as key methodological frameworks for doing ethnography in the global south, as both concepts acknowledge the inherently non-exhaustive nature of knowledge. By considering my positionality as a native ethnographer, the chapter highlights the ethical implications of conducting ethnography at home through ideas of strangerness (Ahmed, 2000) and epistemic translation (Hanks and Severi, 2014).

2.3. Sitting in the Dark with Glimpses of Light: The Epistemic Space of Translation

The notion of sitting in the dark was coined by Nafissatou, the kiosk owner I interacted with for about a week before being introduced to Safi, who happened to work in the maquis, *Le Navire de la Cite*, situated in the Zongo *non-loti*. After confessing to Nafissatou that I struggled to understand her and her clients when they spoke in Moore, she laughed and said, *"So you are sitting in the dark".* At the time, I did not find it pertinent to have a research assistant because of the intimate bond I had already formed with research participants, regardless of the frequent language barrier. Although interviews were conducted in French or Dioula, a large portion of the field notes was recorded by observing and listening to what I phrase as 'glimpses of light' while 'sitting in the dark'. These glimpses of light came to me through observation and codeswitching with the French language. The following excerpt from my field notes during a hang out session with Tantie (research participant discussed in the next chapter) demonstrates the way I 'caught' glimpses of light while 'sitting in the dark':

> *"Once again, as Nafissatou said, I'm sitting in the dark, but I perceive blinking lights. Tantie seems to be talking about an issue she's facing. She seems slightly preoccupied as she frequently frowns her black eyebrows and green eyelids, revealing her slightly wrinkled forehead. Could she be part of a political party? I hear a lot of words and phrases in French like "militant" [activist], "la politique c'est comme ça" [That's the way politics is], "carte de militant" [activist card], "Ce n'est pas un problème" [It is*

not a problem] "ca va aller" [It shall be well], from the school's headmaster [her interlocutor]. Around 3:30 pm, Tantie ends her conversation with a "merci beaucoup" [thank you very much] and we head out towards my motorbike parked under the tree. Then, she asked me if I drink dolo [local beer made from fermented millet] and suggested that we head off to a friend of hers who sells some dolo nearby. It was a small wooden hangard (about 5m square) with a cemented floor, about 4 benches and wooden tables when we arrived. She asked the young woman serving for two small calabashes of dolo and insisted on paying for them. The young woman serving us the dolo had no facial makeup on. As we sipped on our succulent dolo, I tried to ask her about the motive of her visit to the school director. He was part of a party called NTD, affiliated to MPP, the current president's political party. She said she became the president of the female activists of the party, and her colleagues were giving her a hard time. When I asked her why she chose this party, she said because it's president Roch Marc's party. 'We are all Mossi [predominant ethnic group in Ouagadougou], so we must support him'. Often, when I sit in the dark, glimpses of light surface and resurface whenever people around me mention a french word in a Moore sentence. This code-switching often helps me situate the context of the discussion and lay the foundation for my following interview questions, where I document and acquaint myself with the glimpses of light caught and the indecipherable knowledge that will remain buried in the dark" (Field notes, 10th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

As the excerpt above suggests, after 'sitting in the dark', I often tried to gain more insights by asking questions based on the words and phrases I managed to understand during a conversation in Moore. Although I was only two steps away from the people, I worked with, sitting in the dark with glimpses of light often felt like I was on a WhatsApp video call, with a bad network rendering occasional glitches. Regardless, I was often able to understand the situation through this technique, first, by collecting additional data via senses other than my ears, and second, by interviewing individuals right after. Hanks and Severi (2014) indicate that the passage of meaning from one language or society to another does not only happen after the translator has understood the original meaning. According to them, translation happens in many informal ways every day, via code-switching, paraphrasing, etc., especially among bi or multilingual people. They, therefore, suggest an epistemological space of translation as a

methodology. Practically speaking, this entails noting what we can know, how we can know it, and how we can make it known. I caught glimpses of light through different means, depending on the context in which I found myself. Most of my interviews were conducted in French, although

French was often my interlocutors' second or third language. With participants that spoke dioula, I understood perfectly what they said and often asked other multilingual participants to translate the few words that I could not understand, even after participants themselves had explained further. In the instance of Bintou Ma, a participant of this research, her 16-year-old daughter participated in our interviews and played the role of a

Moore to French and French to Moore translator. By paying full attention to her daughter's translation process, the few Moore words I understood, and her body language, I was able to record the glimpses of light the context allowed me to grasp. Although most of the French to English translations were done by me, the DeepL.com translation website greatly assisted the bulky process faster and free.

This second excerpt from my field notes demonstrates further insights on the process of translation during my interview with Bintou and her mother:

> *"Throughout my time in the dark, I noticed keywords in an attempt to grasp the context better. This was often done by unpacking literal translations and meanings. While listening to Bintou translate my questions to her mother, I noticed that she used the*
>
> *Moore word 'nagam' to translate 'makeup'. Below is a short conversation between Bintou and I on nagam.*
>
> *Me: You see, for instance, there are words that when you translate in french from another language, it does not sound and mean the same. So is nagam makeup or does it mean something else?*
>
> *Bintou: It means to make yourself beautiful.*
>
> *Me: Okay. When you hear nagam, do you think of something else, or do you think of makeup?*
>
> *Bintou: No, just makeup and beauty"* (Field interview with Bintou Ma And Bintou, 24th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Through these kinds of conversations with research participants and benevolent translators, I was able to explore the epistemic space of translation, recording what can be known and acknowledging what could have been lost in translation. Translating and writing the data collected in English was a daunting task as French/Dioula to English translations gave the impression that participants' voices were denatured through the syntax modification inherent to language translation. In acknowledging possible knowledge lost in translation, I noticed a common trend among participants who were not fluent in French. Whenever they failed to describe their experience in detail, many participants would answer my questions by saying:

"Rien" [Nothing]. This word was often mentioned whenever I asked participants to provide further detail on an opinion they expressed. In some cases, those walls of "Nothing" got demolished over time; in others, they stood firm. In my analysis, I interpret such instances as participants claiming their right to opacity (Glissant, 1990).

2.4. Opacity and strangerness

In one of his most famous works, *Poetique de la Relation*, the Martinican philosopher, Edouard Glissant, affirms the critical and political implications of the notion of opacity in considering human relations. This concept speaks explicitly to the fact that it is "impossible to reduce anyone, no matter who, to a truth, he would not have generated on his own" (Glissant and Wing, 2007:194). In Glissant's philosophy, the idea of totality impedes totality itself. In 'grasping' glimpses of light in 'darkness' throughout my fieldwork, I acknowledge the inherently incomplete nature of those very glimpses by virtue of existing in the dark as emerging snippets of a bigger story. Thus, recognizing the opacity of dialogues and experiences described in this thesis is coming to terms with the fractality of human behaviour. Ultimately, opacity can be a great analytical tool for the maquis because it acknowledges the chaotic nature of human relations. In addressing ways of dealing with differences and opacities between the ethnographer and research participants, Ahmed (2000) reflects on both parties' relationship with 'strangerness'. She claims that while the anthropologist may be considered strangers, they are instead at home in the field by being the 'observer', allowing the stranger to be familiar with their strangerness (Ahmed; ibid.). This idea, she claims, allows the stranger to exist both within and without the participants' field of knowledge, which directly speaks to Agar's

(1980:41) claim that "Ethnography is really quite an arrogant enterprise. In a short period of time, an ethnographer moves in among a group of strangers to study and describe their beliefs, document their social life, write about their subsistence strategies, and generally explore their territory right down to their recipes for the evening meal". The idea of the ethnographer being at home in the field, Ahmed (2000) argues, often posits research participants as objects of knowledge rather than coming into being in the absence of knowledge. Drawing inspiration from Hortence Powdermaker's work, she reflects on the need for ethnographers to point out how they both know and fail to know. Indeed, Powdermaker's knowledge of her native participants rendered her closer to them and unable to be with them. Echoing this idea, Ahmed (2000:62) postulates that "her [Powdermaker] knowledge becomes if you like, a knowledge which admits the impossibility of being with them [her research participants]". In my case, I considered myself to be both a native and an ethnographer on the field. Having been born in Ouagadougou, I moved to Ghana, where I learned how to speak and write in English when I was 12. However, I kept strong ties with the city of Ouagadougou through my family during the school holidays. Yet, I was clearly an outsider in Zongo for reasons mostly related to my class positionality (further discussed in the chapter) and inability to fluently express myself in Moore. The following excerpt from my first reflection after landing in Ouagadougou illustrates my relationship with 'strangerness' in Burkina Faso:

> "*As I landed in Ouaga, I wondered how long it would take before I'm reminded that I'm a stranger in this place I call home. After every passport check, the immigration officer would say my surname: "Sanogo!" with a sense of familiarity and assertiveness. These immigration agents at the airport were the best people at reminding me that although my name was Sanogo, I did not quite embody it. They often asked me questions in Moore or Dioula, as though to test my legitimacy. Sometimes, I had an answer, but I had no idea what they meant when they spoke in Moore most of the time. This always left me with a feeling of strangeness in a somewhat familiar place*" (Fieldnotes, 11th December 2020, Ouagadougou).

Being somewhat strange native ethnographer, that is, both an insider and an outsider was a tricky position because being a native gave room for a kind of objectification fairly similar to what Ahmed (2000) warns ethnographers about. I constantly had to be cautious about

projecting the ideas I thought I knew as a native onto the ideas exposed to me as an ethnographer. This entailed treating my assumptions about local knowledge as relative and sometimes opaque to let my research participants come into being, thereby creating their version of a story I thought I knew through my own experiences in Ouagadougou. Still, as the post-fieldwork reflection below demonstrates, there were a few crucial elements that were overlooked:

> "*The limitations of doing ethnography at home included overseeing familiar concepts or technologies. While writing this monograph, I became more aware of this when I noticed that the description of items such as djabi [henna] or tatouage [Black henna for eyebrows] was missing from my field notes. Then, I realized that I had no idea how to describe Djabi or tatouage in English and French. While growing up, there was always a djabi [henna] tree in my parents' yard. The djabi tree was both a source of pain and pleasure. As kids, whenever my siblings and I disobeyed our parents, the djabi tree's slender branches were cut off and used as canes to punish us.*
> *On the other hand, the same henna tree was a source of pleasure and a tool for conviviality during Eid celebrations. My sister and I would plug off its leaves, dry and grind them before mixing the powder with some water to turn it into a smooth paste that we then carefully applied on our hands, then on our feet. So, When I encountered the djabi during my fieldwork, it felt so familiar and intimate, its description was nonexistent in my notes*" (post-field notes, 18th April 2021, Cape Town).

During my fieldwork, being both an insider and an outsider often facilitated creating a convivial environment while conversing with people from the southwest region of Burkina, where my father is from. When I met Bintou Ma's husband, he immediately became playful and friendly with me after I told him I was from the country's Southwest region. On the other hand, being an outsider gave some of the people I worked with, like Tantie, brief moments of fame. Whenever she introduced me to people, she would say, *"She comes from South Africa!"* with a big smile and a proud voice. Regardless of my familiarity with Ouagadougou, some phenomena were new to me. Like many Anthropology students conducting ethnography in the Global South, I grappled with anxieties of reproducing internalized systems and ideologies of alterity throughout my research process (Nyamnjoh, 2012). In the end, I found refuge in

abstaining from automatically equating epistemic difference with danger, making peace with strangerness, incompleteness, and opacity.

Finally, reflecting on doing ethnography at home, I often juggled between being a good ethnographer and a good daughter, sister, or friend. Fieldwork in Ouagadougou constantly required navigating between aspects of my personhood, concealing, or revealing my ethnographer's hat. Moreover, outside of the maquis, there was a silent pressure from my family to stay 'respectable'. Although I always left Zongo around 7 pm for security reasons because I had to drive for about 10 minutes on a dim-lit serpentine road before reaching the tar road (N1) with streetlights, I also felt the obligation to be back at my parents' house at a 'respectable hour' of the day to promote conviviality at home. In that light, I also was a maquis artist, navigating between family and academia.

2.5. Class positionality: Ouaga Sans Char, C'est la Galere [Ouaga without Bike, It's a Hustle]

The phrase "Ouaga sans char, c'est la galere" is borrowed from the Burkinabe artist, Zêdess' famous song *Ouaga sans char*, where he sings about the social ostracisation and hustles that come with not owning a motorbike in Ouagadougou, considered to be an economic class marker, a determinant for respectability. Research participants like Tantie gained some respect from her neighbours by borrowing my bike. She would tell me how people thought my bike cost 1 million CFA [$1800] and often borrowed my bike for her errands. Even though the bike I was using cost about a third of the price imagined by Tanti's neighbours, this poignant interest in my bike gave me great insights into my class positionality and Tanti's aspirations, which will be discussed further detail in the second chapter. Apart from the 3 makeup artists I interviewed, none of the women I worked with in Zongo owned a bike. Although 4 out of the 7 research participants in Zongo owned a bicycle, including Tantie, I had easier access to their homes than they did to mine. Only Tantie got to know where I live because I took her to my home towards the end of my fieldwork, as she wanted to know my parents' home to maintain relationships before I left for Cape Town. This restricted mobility was illustrated during a conversation I had with Binta, Tantie's sister-in-law. Binta stayed in Pissy, just about 16 km from Zongo. I stayed in the same area. During our discussion, I mentioned that my parents' home was very close to hers. After giving her directions to my home, she smiled and said to

me: *"It's not far because you have a bike".* Slightly embarrassed by my blind spot, I nodded and took note. My parents' home was about 2 km away from Bintou's home. Although it took me about 5 mn to get to Binta's home, she mentioned that it would require her about 15 to 20 mn to get to my place with her bicycle, and even more, if she did not have access to a bicycle that day. This comment pointed to an important class marker in Ouagadougou: motorbikes. Indeed, in this context, one could think of our distinct notions of distance as an economic class indicator. The distance I rode every day, from Pissy to Zongo, symbolised this gap between myself and the people I worked with. Referring to my bike, Tanti explained:

> *"When I tell people this bike isn't even CFA 500,000 ($800), they say it's a lie. Because it's beautiful and shiny, people think it's up to 1 million CFA. When you sit on it, people look at you"* (Fieldwork interview with Tantie, 2nd February 2021).

In this case, bikes can be thought of as a kind of makeup, a technology of visibility that attracts admiring looks on one. When tanti choco borrowed my bike for small errands in her neighbourhood, she often came back with stories of compliments people gave her while riding my bike: "They said I must tell my husband to buy one for me because it looks good on me", she would often say. In Ouagadougou, bikes occupied a very important role in determining one's wealth. As the Burkinabe singer Zêdess sang, "Ouaga without bike, there is no respect" (Ouaga Sans Char, 1998). The distance between Pissy and Zongo could easily be a metaphor for theorising the distance between the women I worked with and myself. However, this distance between my parents' home and Zongo was often transcended, not by bodies but by technologies. To my surprise, I found creams, drugs and similar behaviour patterns I encountered in Zongo in my parents' house. This demonstrated that the spatial compartmentalisation between my home and Zongo was imagined to some extent. Although both spaces required that I utilise different aspects of my personhood, the presence of some technologies of visibility encountered in Zongo in my home proved that my parents' home was an integral part of the field.

Regardless of my middle-class status in Ouagadougou, being a citizen of a country at the margins of global capitalism most likely meant that one was still unable to afford tertiary education outside of their country's borders. As much as my family was considered middle class in Ouagadougou, neither my parents nor I would have been able to afford the University of Cape Town's $5000 tuition fees. My masters degree at UCT was made possible through a

scholarship I received from the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, which covered my plane ticket to Cape Town, my tuition fees, living expenses, as well as this research. Paradoxically, it would have been more challenging for a young woman living in Zongo to access such opportunities as most of them are only accessible online. One would need access to electricity and a phone or a computer to apply for such opportunities.

2.6. Positionality within the Maquis

The strongest bias I believe I struggled with was the maquis women versus married women binarism. Prior to my fieldwork, I had only seen maquis from afar. As I read and reread my field notes, I realized that I was not descriptive enough. For instance, while describing my first time in the maquis, I wrote:

> *"Inside, there were paintings of half-dressed ladies on the wall, which indicated that we were in the right place"* (field notes, 23rd December 2020, Ouagadougou).

The phrase "half-dressed" suggests that I had a preconception of what a dressed person in Ouagadougou would look like. However, by pointing out that I was at the right place, I was insinuating that the maquis was the right place to be "half-dressed". The women painted on the wall were wearing a camisole that exposed their arms and breast cleavage. Their mini skirt, right above their knees clung to their body like a clingwrap, revealing their curvy hips and small waist. Based on what I was taught by my parents, extended family members, and friends, a respectable woman was a fully dressed woman. A full dress often involved wearing clothing and skirts below knee level. Being in the "right place" suggested that I was indeed expecting women in the maquis to dress only 'halfway'. The symbolism on the maquis walls perfectly fit the social perception of the maquis, that is, the right place to dress wrong. For this reason, I was surprised to see waitresses like Safi tying a cloth around her waist for work, a symbol of 'good' womanhood, her own way of avoiding "derangements", as she framed unwanted romantic advances from clients in the maquis.

The popular belief around maquis women and my perception were that maquis women were devious and sexually promiscuous women who half-dressed to attract clients. This research

enabled me to understand that the way women who worked in the maquis chose to dress was more nuanced and served a deeper purpose than what the popular discourse often insinuated.

After spending three days in the maquis, I realized I had to respond to the maquis clients' cat calling if I wanted to continue conducting research there. This entailed stepping out of personal identity frames and stepping into the field's frames of knowledge, mainly regarding my physiological appearance. As much as I did not apply makeup on my face, I had to conceal aspects of myself in many ways. I wore no eyeliner, eye shadow, or lipstick, only shea butter for my lips and occasionally mascara. During my first days in the maquis, I paid careful attention to how the maquis staff and clients interact. This gave deep insights on the behaviour I had to adapt to maintain a convivial environment for research, thereby making up. After wearing a pair of ripped jeans to the maquis on Christmas day, the manager of the maquis warned me never to wear ripped jeans to the maquis again if I wanted peace. He explained, *"There is a network [of symbols and meaning]. You are not on the market so you should not send signals"* (field notes, 25th December 2020, Ouagadougou). In the manager's opinion, ripped jeans, just like eye shadows and lipstick, was a symbol of promiscuity.

By wearing this technology, I sent "signals" about who I was and what I wanted in the maquis. Nevertheless, regardless of what I wore, I was often harassed by male customers by virtue of owning breasts and hips, like the women painted on the walls of the maquis. After seeing how uncomfortable I was with the sexual harassment, the manager of the maquis started telling clients, with my permission, that I was his *cherie* [darling]. Being tagged as the manager's *cherie* saved me from trouble many times. This differentiated me from waitresses because, in the maquis, waitresses had multiple *cheris*, as discussed further in chapter 4. Hence, being one man's *cherie* meant that other men had to respect the man who claimed me by refraining from making romantic advances to me. Foucault (1984) mentions that entrance into heterotopias may require some kind of performance, appropriate clothing and sensitivity to codes and doxas. He highlights that some entrances may lead visitors to an 'exterior enclosure'. Although visibly open, heterotopias like the maquis had specific requirements and codes that strangers needed to adhere to. It can be argued that my *cherie* status in the maquis led me to an 'interior enclosure'. I was neither a client nor a staff. In that light, the manager was the maquis' gatekeeper. For me, being the manager's 'cherie' did not only mean that when he was present in the maquis, I would be free from clients' harassment, but it also meant that I had a recognized and 'legal' position in the maquis.

The latter was utterly important as many people were suspicious of me during my first days in maquis. For instance, on my third day, I was accused of being a terrorist spy by two male clients. We were having a drink together at the bar counter when one of them started touching my fanny pack, asking whether there was a bomb inside. The other man standing next to us also seemed curious about what I transported in my bag. Right away, I hastily unzipped every pocket of my fanny pack to show them they had nothing to worry about. After seeing my power bank, tiny notebook, shea butter, and money, they still seemed puzzled. They kept looking at me suspiciously, as though they were desperately trying to make sense of my person. In a way, we were all trying to make sense of each other through different methodologies. That was the first and the last time I was overtly suspected of terrorism. Nonetheless, the manager of the maquis informed me several times throughout my fieldwork that people often came to him, warning him about me, as they thought I was a policewoman, carrying out an investigation. I was not the only woman who faked the presence of a suitor as a way of making up in the maquis. Safi told me a story about some men in the maquis who once called her to their table. First, they asked her if she was married. When she said yes, they still insisted on getting her phone number, and she told them it was her husband's phone. Frustrated, the customer chased her away. She also recounts a similar incident that happened while she was walking back home from work. On her way, a man came out of nowhere to chat with her. It was around 11 pm. He called her, but she didn't answer. Then, he sped up and stopped his motorbike right in front of her, got down, and started following her. She continued walking. Luckily, she saw another motorbike coming and quickly took her phone to pretend she was on a call with her imaginary husband. She said: "Cheri, you know I get off at this time and you don't come? Where's the motorbike? You also, you know I'm waiting for you" (field interview with Safi, 27th December 2020, Ouagadougou). She mentioned that the 'strange' man wanted to hit her and even told her that he would take a knife and kill her if she wasn't careful. "Thank God there was a motorbike that appeared right there. The man riding the bike asked me what was going on. When I explained to him, he said I should get behind him. He dropped me off near the tar road where there was light" (field interview with Safi, ibid.). These stories highlight the precarity of working in a maquis and the apparent phallocentric nature of making up and accessing opportunity in the form of safety and respect in Ouagadougou.

For a woman to have a chance at escaping other men's harassment, she often had to be defended by another man. Here, just as feminist ethnographers like Tedlock (1995) and Schrock (2013)

have argued in a different context, men were the gatekeepers of opportunities. As such, the women of this thesis, including myself, often found ways of making up through them. In my case, being the "manager's cheri" meant that I was shielded from sexual harassment, but I was also cautious about the additional gap this created between the waitresses at the maquis and me. In response to this, I constantly reminded the waitresses that I was not in the maquis to be served like most clients. Wherever I wanted a drink, I would walk to the counter and serve myself or the person I was chatting with. I also helped the waitresses clean the chairs, which has proven to be a great method for data collection and for creating a convivial environment. Regardless, I remained the 25-year-old student from South Africa who was the manager's "Cherie". These categorizations affected how I was perceived and, consequently, the kind of data that I extracted from the field.

2.7. Further Notes on Methods

In the maquis, every discussion happened around a beer. I often sat with the waitresses at their table or at the bar counter with maquis clients. Informal focus groups discussions with waitresses often happened while sharing a beer or cleaning the chairs. As Fatou mentioned to me, "Here, if you don't drink, you can't talk with someone" (field interview, 21st February 2021, Ouagadougou). Thus, drinks were key tools for conviviality in the maquis. I would often buy the women I spoke to a beer or two to retain their time and attention. Although a major part of my data collection took part in the maquis, many interviews were conducted outside of the maquis, in participants' homes, away from the maquis' loud music. Apart from the makeup artists, all participants were interviewed 3 to 5 times for about 1 hour or 2. Each makeup artist was interviewed once. At the end of my fieldwork, I had 85 hours long interviews to transcribe.

In sum, the maquis was a place of 'order and chaos'. On the one hand, it was a space of expression for the antithesis of Burkinabe ideals of femininity par excellence. On the other hand, one could observe waitresses navigate and negotiate these waters to find the right balance between society's ideals, their ideals, and the maquis' thirst for 'promiscuous makeup'. To find the right balance between all these ideas, one had to be an agile maquis artist, a skill that saved lives.

2.8. Ethics: Sponsoring Makeup

From the offset of my fieldwork, I ensured the people I worked with understood that I was there to address a knowledge gap within academia, not the financial gap between the people I worked with and myself. On a few instances, though, I was compelled to lend some money to Vivi (¢13). She asked me to beg Tantie on her behalf because she owed her 500f (¢13) after purchasing some makeup from her. That evening, as she spoke to me, she mentioned that she was short of cash and had not eaten since the day started. She explained that Tantie had threatened her for her money many times and had no money to pay back. To avoid a fight between the two participants, I decided to pay for the ¢13 makeup that Vivi had already started using. Regardless, my relationship with the people I worked with was built on mutual respect. I always made sure to leave space for questions participants might have about myself or the research. I was also met with a lot of generosity from participants who often offered me food and water in their homes and beer in the maquis. In writing this thesis, although some of the people I worked with did not mind me using their real names, I chose to use pseudonyms to ensure participants' anonymity and privacy. Further, although this ethnography was not visual, the thesis features photos that I took throughout my fieldwork, with permission from the owner of the object of my phone camera.

2.9. Conclusion: Global Pandemic? Some Fight Covid While Others Fight Dust

In closing this chapter, it is important to highlight that in as much as the ongoing covid-19 pandemic is not the topic of this thesis, considering people's experience of this global health crisis is imperative as this played a critical role in accessing my research field.

Strikingly, nobody wore a mask in Zongo. Only a few bikers wore masks for protection against the harmattan dust. They feared dust because of the flu, meningitis or angina, very frequent diseases during the harmattan season from November to March. When they got off their bike, they removed their mask because they feared hunger, malaria, or child mortality even more than the coronavirus. As such, people referred to Covid-19 as "la maladie la", that is, "that sickness", as though to highlight its somewhat distant. In Ouagadougou, Covid-19 was a drop in a pool of diseases. People feared hunger, malaria and cervical cancer more than they feared the coronavirus. Throughout this pandemic, I have experienced two worlds: One in Cape Town,

where masks are mandatory, another where people only wear masks to protect themselves from the harmattan dust. How people use masks in different parts of the world, convey meanings and tell stories of inequalities. Indeed, one could argue that the institutionalization of masks is a privilege. In many wealthy countries, corona is the number one public health enemy. In poorer ones such as Burkina Faso, it is merely an empty can on a dumping ground. Whenever discussions about the pandemic would arise, it was in the form of complaints around the structural implications of the pandemic, such as the closing of terrestrial borders. On my first day in the maquis, I saw Lili, one of the waitresses, use a hand sanitiser. When I asked her if it was because of corona, she said it's because her hands are always in water because of dishes or oil because of food, and added in Dioula, "If it was corona, we would have all been dead by now". Corona might have changed formal structures in the country, impeding mobility and official activities, but on the field, people did not seem worried at all, which may explain why it was relatively easy to access people's spaces and faces, enabling me to carry out an ethnography of facial adornment techniques. This incongruence between time and space observed in Ouagadougou at the time I carried my fieldwork can be explained by considering

Giddens' notion of 'time-space distanciation', where time and space connect presence and absence. In as much as the pandemic was a global concern, it was mostly absent in people's everyday concerns (Samuelsen and Toe Pare, 2021). In some instances, corona was the object of jokes. While visiting Safi at her house, Oumou, her young daughter, started coughing while we were all seated in the yard. Right after her cough, the neighbour exclaimed, in an amused tone: *"Hey!coronavirus!".* Right away, everyone burst into laughter. We could see each other's smiles as nobody wore a mask, myself included. In that way, we chose to see each other's smiles and laughter over the seemingly elusive promise of a healthy life that wearing a mask suggested. We did so because *"Corona or not, people die anyway"* (Fieldwork interview with Safi, 23rd December 2020, Ouagadougou). The following chapter demonstrates how these women leveraged this 'time-space distanciation' to make up unmasked faces.

Chapter 3: Makeup and Making up The Face: Eyes and Skin

3.1. Summary

Focusing on the concept of makeup as *Nagam* [making oneself beautiful], women's use of makeup as a facial adornment and navigation practice is discussed in this chapter. The chapter uses the image of the maquis girl (see figure 1) to investigate contemporary Burkinabe constructions of femininity, drawing inspiration from 'The Modern Girl' as a global heuristic device for modern female ways of being. As maquis artists par excellence, women use the art of maquis by leveraging their domesticated agency and morphing their facial features in ways that mirror their aspirations. By introducing skin lightening, eyeshadows, eyeliner, and eyelash extensions as technologies of visibility, this section momentarily addresses how women tap into their bodily capital to adorn their lives as they practice the art of maquis.

3.2. Introduction

As Donoghue (2003:87) posits, "it [beauty] is a figure of happiness, not a promise, but a hint of possibility". This chapter focuses on facial makeup, showcasing ways in which women embody beauty and happiness. Through facial adornment techniques, the people I worked with morphed their eyes and skin to access opportunities in the form of financial and social capital. Here, thinking from the maquis reveals the pragmatic use of eye makeup and skin lightening among women in Ouagadougou. Furthermore, the chapter argues that an examination of local notions of respectability and modernity through facial adornment reveals a contextualized version of the "modern girl" (Alys E. et al., 2008). This kind of enquiry converges with contemporary ethnographic studies on how Africa constantly reinvents global trends (Fuh, 2021; Ndjio, 2008). In Ouagadougou, the tension between global, regional and local beauty standards manifested through women's affinity for shiny or brown skin and eye makeup practices. Regarding the images of the women painted on maquis walls (see figure 1) the 'Modern Girl' neologism is employed as a heuristic device to position the maquis girl as the Burkinabe modern girl par excellence. This analysis reveals how women in Ouagadougou navigate tensions between local notions of respectability and the desire to reap the fruits of modernity. Therefore, research participants used makeup as a facial adornment technique to

navigate financial stability and respectability aspirations. Women who could not afford to wear makeup every day, either for financial or work-related reasons, found alternative adornment practices such as *sanyani* [cleanliness]. Through the stories and voices of this chapter, I argue that by choosing to makeup (or not) their skin or eyes, these women navigate respectability and belonging in a society where intersubjectivity is crucial for conviviality (Nyamnjoh, 2002). Dwelling on the research participants' belief that eyes '*Changent le regard'* [Change the look], this chapter examines the affective dimension of facial beauty in Ouagadougou.

3.3. Intersubjectivity in Zongo

In Zongo, people relied on each other to sustain and beautify their lives. Relationships were as entwined as the houses in Zongo. Women relied on each other to look after their kids and often borrowed cooking utensils and money. As such, the knowledge they produced about themselves had profound implications for their lives as it determined whether one was worthy of other people's help or respect. Often, it would determine whether one was offered drinks and money in the maquis or secured a job at the end of the month. Studying makeup in a context of economic precarity allows for a deeper understanding of the practical use of cosmetics as technologies of visibility, thereby revealing the social script for facial beauty in a specific spatio-temporality. The women I worked with employed facial makeup techniques to benefit from the social and financial capital inherent to beauty, thereby sustaining themselves and their families. In that light, women chose to morph their faces in ways that both reflected their domesticated agency and interdependence in the pursuit of conviviality and beauty. As mentioned earlier, Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh discusses the need to consider a prevalent version of agency in postcolonial African countries, "not as independence or dependence, but interdependence and intersubjectivity" (Nyamnjoh, 2002:26). In Zongo, notions of personhood and intersubjectivity were intimately woven in participants' names. As such, women were either called by the name of their firstborn child or husband. For instance, *Bintou Ma*, where Bintou was the name of the participant's firstborn daughter, *Rasta paga [Rasta's wife],* or *Clemence Ma,* were phrases used by friends and neighbours *to* refer to women. This phenomenon suggested the value people attributed to family and matrimony and the underlying interdependence grounded in local notions of personhood.

Nonetheless, intersubjectivity was not confined to Zongo. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I had to navigate my own intersubjectivity with my family, sometimes at the expense of going to the field. The short extract from field notes below illustrates such instances:

> *"This Sunday, my sister insisted that we go greet my maternal uncles and aunts. She said it was an obligation. As much as she understood I was conducting research every day, she found that visiting my uncles and aunts to wish them a happy new year was necessary to maintain conviviality in our extended family. Of course, I also had to present respectably to show that I am a good daughter. As my aunt mentioned on our visit, 'family is the seed of society'. Thus, it made sense that I document this outing to understand how intersubjectivity manifests within my own family and society. Conducting ethnography at home suggests that one never physically steps out of the field"* (Fieldnotes, 17th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

In Ouagadougou, women's facial makeup was influenced by their personhood. Through an analysis of eye and skin adornment techniques, the subsections below attempt to tell the stories of women who embody their intersubjectivity to access opportunities, thereby beautifying their experience of life.

3.4. Makeup and Morphing Ontologies

While the women I worked with moulded their morphology through the conscious process of making up, they had various aspirations. Some sought social capital through respectability, and others pursued financial capital through facial adornment techniques. In the maquis, beauty was a crucial element in attracting male clients, a promise of financial capital, both for waitresses and the maquis. As the maquis manager alluded to, the most valuable waitresses were the ones who attracted most clients and looked closest to the women's paintings on the maquis walls:

> *"There's a market, and everyone has their own preferences. Some like light skins, big ass, big breast. A waitress that has all the above has a lot of potential. My job is to strike the balance between waitresses who work hard and the ones who attract more customers. Also, it's hard to fire waitresses that attract many customers"* (Field interview with Manager, 6th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Throughout my fieldwork, I observed a dominant image of the maquis woman on maquis walls all over the city of Ouagadougou. Aside from their 'big ass' and 'big breast', the faces of the women painted on maquis walls also stood out through their shiny eyeshadow painted on their upper eyelids, their carefully shaped dark eyebrows, and their brown and shiny looking skin (See figure 1). Quite similarly, multinational and local cosmetics businesses in the 1920s and 1930s promoted a distinct 'Modern Girl' style all over the world, showing Modern Girls with carefully made up faces, bobbed hair, exposed arms and backs, and bodies dressed in the latest fashions (Alys E. *et al.*, 2008). As much as maquis women differed from Modern Girls in various ways, notably, financial status and labour type, both categories were tagged as women who challenged dogmatic constructions of womanhood through their adornment techniques. They were maquis artists. What specifically made the 'Modern Girl' stand out was "their use of specific commodities and their explicit eroticism…Adorned in provocative fashions, in pursuit of romantic love, Modern Girls appeared to disregard roles of dutiful daughter, wife, and mother" (Alys E. *et al.*, 2008:2). Hence, as mentioned earlier, the image of the maquis woman can be used as a heuristic device to examine the interplay of local, regional, and global constructions of beauty in Ouagadougou.

Women, as maquis artists, had an extensive understanding of the affective dimension of facial adornment. They consequently morphed their psychobiological face into becoming a symbolic stage where the drama of socialization is enacted (Turner, 1980). In that light, makeup was often seen as a practice that merged the psychological with the physiological, both body and consciousness, based on the ideological premise that there is a hidden beauty inside subjects that makeup renders access to. By concealing their eyes and skin, women allowed their otherwise concealed inner beauty to be revealed. This philosophy is intimately linked to the famous Italian artist Michelangelo's subtractive sculpting method. In his practice, Michelangelo suggests that the sculptor's job is to unleash the sculpture from the rock in which the sculpture has been slumbering. While some women believed that makeup had the power to fully transform one's face, creating a whole new subject, others believed that makeup was a technique used to unleash their inner beauty, their aspirational self. As discussed below, these two tendencies are not mutually exclusive. Throughout my fieldwork, I observed that the gap between one's face without makeup and one's 'inner beauty' is often used as a marker of respectability. In other words, the type and quantity of makeup women applied on their faces often symbolized the gap between being a "fille de joie" [Promiscuous woman, often thought

of as a prostitute] (Field interview with Ela, 6th January 2021, Ouagadougou) and a respectable woman. Regardless, it could be argued that just like the artist Michelangelo, these women aspired to unleash their inner 'sculpture' by highlighting and concealing their skin and eyes. Most of the time, this 'inner beauty' was heavily curated based on women's aspirations. Participants asserted their domesticated agency (Nyamnjoh, 2002) by using makeup within acceptable social boundaries while consciously choosing the extent to which they wanted to mould their face and way of being. Ultimately, the idea of making one's true beauty emerge through makeup was born out of a mismatch between one's face without makeup and their aspirational self. Hence, using the maquis women as a heuristic device in unpacking how women in Ouagadougou navigate their facial socialization becomes a potent analysis point for competing notions of global and local beauty. The maquis, unlike the *Tchapalodrome*, a traditional point of beverage consumption, is considered a place of modernity, a place where the Burkinabe working class can aspire to be 'modern'. Just as the youth in Abidjan considered the maquis a theatre of modern performativity (Newell, 2012; Goffman, 2007), many of the women I worked with used their face as a performance stage for modernity. Contrasting ways of being in the *tchapalodrome* with the maquis, Saly, Fatou's roommate who worked in a *tchapalodrome* before she moved from her village to Ouagadougou, mentioned:

> *"Can you even get makeup in the village? When I sold Tchapalo in the village, I had no hair even. They [male clients] didn't care. They just liked to chat"* (Field interview with Fatou, 24th February 2021, Ouagadougou)

Unlike the *tchapalodrome*, the maquis demanded that women perform modernity. Thus, many women who aspired to attract clients' tips and favours in the maquis strived to simulate the maquis woman's physiology with the help of technologies of visibility. This simulation was so important to some participants that they considered their faces incomplete and imperfect without makeup. During an interview with Fatou, a research participant who worked in the maquis, I asked her what she saw every time she looked in the mirror without makeup as she got ready for her shift at the maquis. Blankly staring at the mirror, she held in her left hand, she answered:

> *"I feel that there is a lot missing. I feel that my face is not perfect...makeup gives another face, and it brings out your beauty. And you feel good about yourself. You feel beautiful. There is nothing like feeling beautiful because you feel that you too have a beauty inside you that is hidden. By putting makeup on you, it brings out that beauty and when people see it it's very pretty to see*" (Field interview with Fatou, 22nd February 2021).

Similarly, Blacktimi, a makeup artist, agreed that makeup concealed imperfections and considered it to be an extension of her being. During our interview, she mentioned:

> *"It adds a plus [to one's face] ...Makeup is part of beauty. It is to add a plus. Because when we wear makeup it's to hide our imperfections, or to make us even prettier"* (Field interview with Blacktimi, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Vivi, another research participant who worked at the maquis, expressed this feeling of incompleteness without makeup. For Vivi, makeup was a way to step into her humanity. While discussing makeup, and spaces, she highlighted:

> *"Even when I was in the village, when I showered, I had to put on makeup, even to go to the river. I just got used to it. If I shower and I don't put makeup on, I don't want to get close to people. I feel as if I am not a human being. For example, if my boyfriend comes to my home, if I wear makeup, he will say that I'm beautiful and he won't want to leave. But if I don't, I feel like he will get disappointed. I feel ugly if I don't wear makeup. That's how it is. Nobody said I was ugly, but me, my face without makeup, it disturbs me"* (Field interview with Vivi, 21st January 2021, Ouagadougou).

The relational ontological split between the mind and the body discussed by participants above positions makeup as a practice that facilitates the facial embodiment of women's aspirational self, effectively presenting reality and consciousness as co-creators.

3.5. Eye Makeup: Aspirations and Opportunities

3.5.1. Changer Le Regard [Changing the Look]

Many research participants considered eyes to be the most critical site for facial adornment. Making up the eyes often involved concealing upper eyelids with eye shadow and lower eyelids with eyeliner (although I have seen some research participants use eyeliners for their eyebrows). Eyelashes were extended using eyelash extensions, which were glued to the lower part of the upper eyelids, and eyebrows were drawn using *tatouage* [Black henna]. For the three makeup artists I interviewed, eyes were crucial in conveying knowledge about the self.
Changer le regard [Changing the look], that is, changing one's way of seeing and being seen, was essential in the way women morphed their ontologies to access their aspirational self.
They considered facial makeup to be appealing only if the eyes were 'well done'. As Marlette explains:

> *"When you apply the eyeshadow, it really changes your look. Especially when you add the lashes, it totally changes the look. It's the eyes and the eyebrows that take time. The eyeliner changes the look, the eyelashes change the look too. It's very pretty, it changes how you are seen. For a good makeup, it is the eyes and the eyebrows that do the work"* (Field interview with Marlette, 15th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Latifa, also a makeup artist, had a similar view:

> *"The eyes are the most important. The eyes are the basis. When you look at someone most of the time, you look at them in the eyes"* (Field interview with Latifa, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Through their eyes, people produced and gathered knowledge about themselves and others.

Thus, ensuring that one's eyes conveyed the right impression played a crucial role in accessing socio-economic aspirations. The idea of producing knowledge about the self through the eyes is far from being new in the history of consciousness and facial adornment in some parts of West Africa. In his work, *Representing the Self and Its Metaphysical Other in Yoruba Art,* the Nigerian History and Art scholar Babatunde Lawal, explores the complex relationship between beauty and the self in ancient Yoruba society. In describing how the head is purposefully depicted to evoke feelings of respect and appreciation, he asserts that the head was thought to be the seat of the eyes in ancient Yoruba aesthetics philosophy. More so, the eyes were believed to have two parts: the inner and the outer eyes. While discussing Yoruba visual arts, Lawal (2001) explains that the 'visualizer', that is, the transforming power, connects the inner and outside eyes, where the 'outer eye' perceives, and the 'inner eye' filters to determine whether the face is attractive or respectable. Although he discusses this 'transformative power' in terms of portraiture, it can be argued that makeup and technologies of visibility hold a form of transformative power in constructing contemporary Burkinabe female subjectivities. As such, the process of making up one's eyes involved a careful curation of the kind of self-knowledge one desired to convey to other people's 'inner eyes'. By making up their eyes, women concealed their 'outer eyes' to reveal their 'inner eyes', thereby revealing their aspirational psychobiological selves. This process produced knowledge about the self judged by other people's 'inner eyes', a socially constructed filter that determined whether or not a face was respectable, beautiful or attractive. Fatou discussed this phenomenon during one of our' hanging out' sessions:

> *"I prefer to make up my eyes. My face takes on a different look. Eyelashes bring out the beauty of the eyes and so when someone looks at you, they already see the beauty of your eyes. For eyelashes, I liked them since I was young, I used to see people wear them. One day I decided to also go put some on and see how it would turn out. I was asking myself a lot of questions, but the lady there reassured me. She said many people wear them because it brings out the beauty of the eyes. When she placed them, it didn't disturb me. Also, my peers appreciated it, that it's beautiful to see. When I put them [eye lashes] on, many people admired it. So, I felt beautiful"* (Interview with Fatou, 4th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Regardless of the social capital Fatou gained through the compliments she received from her peers when she wore eyelash extensions, she was cognizant of the limits of makeup as a transformative power. Reflecting on the affective dimension of the socialization of bodies based on physical appearance, she mentioned:

> *"Physical looks aren't everything. People should not be judged by how they look. There are people who don't understand anything in life. When they see you, they look at people and they judge you according to what they see when it's not that"* (Interview with Fatou, 4th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

This remark points to the idea that in as much as women aim to portray their inner beauty through makeup, this aspiration is never quite satisfied.

Aside from eyelash extensions and eyeliners, some of the women I worked with used technologies locally referred to as *tatouage* or black henna to adorn their eyebrows. *Henna* is a dye made from the dried leaves of the Lawsonia inermis tree. The leaves are blended with water or oil to make a paste used as a temporary tattoo or hair and eyebrow colour. Henna, also known as *Djabi* in Burkina Faso, is a 5000-year-old art form popular in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Since the Spice Girls utilized it as a body ornamental temporary tattoo in the 1990s, it has grown in popularity in Western societies (Laughter *et al.*, 2020). As figure 4 below shows, eyebrow *tatouages are* primarily drawn over the eyebrows to thicken and darken them. I also observed that some women completely shave their eyebrows to replace them with darker and thicker eyebrows.

Figure 4. Eye makeup by Fatou on my face: Here, eyebrows are concealed with *tatouage*; Upper eyelids are concealed with purple eyeshadow, and lower eyelids, with black eye pencil.

During an informal interview with Ela, a research participant residing in Zongo, and two of her friends, the practical and affective dimensions of *tatouage* was discussed. While gently chewing on her roasted groundnuts, Biba explained*:*

> *"I prefer the tatouage because it lasts. It can last one week whereas the eye pencil must be put every day",* but she also highlights the affective dimensions of wearing *tatouage* by adding that *"Some people put it on and it becomes a wound. If it's your first time, it's better to put it on your hand to test. If you are not careful, with something that costs CFA 200 [¢36] you will go to treat yourself with CFA 5000 [$9]at the hospital"* (Interview with Ela and friends, 27th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

It is for this reason that women like Alice, Ela's friend, choose not to wear *tatouage*. During our discussion, she highlighted:

> *"I don't wear tatouage because some people say that it gives cancer. I don't know, I just hear people say that. I don't wear it. Some people wear it and their skin becomes swollen, others wear it and it doesn't do anything"* (Interview with Ela and friends, 27th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Recent research in the discipline of dermatology has shown that although the untreated red henna (often used as a face browning technology) is not particularly allergenic; commercially available black henna is often mixed with other ingredients with varying concentrations of paraphenylenediamine (PPD) to speed up the dying and drying process and extend the tattoo's duration (Laughter *et al.*, 2020). Allergic reactions to PPD range from localized skin irritation, such as allergic contact dermatitis with moderate inflammation and swelling, to more exuberant blistering reactions with hypopigmentation, scarring, and hypertrichosis, to skin rash lesions with systemic involvement (Elrahman and Alsourory, 2018). Still, as a makeup artist, Marlette had a different opinion on the practice of *tatouage*:

> *"Personally, I don't like tatouage. Because it's too big and too black. You can feel that it's a tattoo, you can feel that it's not natural. It doesn't look real. When I go to a client's house and I see it, it makes me angry because I can't draw the shape I want. And to give the shape I want I must put on more concealer, which is expensive".* A few minutes later, she added that *tatouage* is a *"low quality makeup"* (Field interview with Marlette, 15th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

This opinion highlights the socio-economic categorization of eyebrows makeup in Ouagadougou and the desire for the concealed to seem unconcealed, the true essence of the art of maquis.

3.5.2. Les Yeux D'amour [The Eyes of Love]

When we met, Tantie was a 38-year-old woman who resided in Zongo with her husband and three children. She sold makeup and counterfeit medicine, both in her neighbourhood and in the maquis, where we first met. On the day of our first encounter, her eyes were adorned with green eyeshadow on her upper eyelids and black eye pencil on her lower eyelids. She always had the same makeup wherever she was, even when I visited her in her home. During our hangout sessions, she told me a story about an older man approaching her because of her 'love eyes' in a maquis outside Zongo. She recounts:

> *"I was drinking a beer alone when he came to me and asked if I was interested in going to the hotel with him for a sum of CFA 50000 [$90]. He said he'll pay for a room with a TV and a kitchen. He added that he doesn't want to have sex, he just wants to cuddle and suck my boobs and anus. Then he said that my eyes were beautiful. 'The eyes of love', he called them. He told me to leave my bicycle at the maquis and then we will go in his car. Men who like women do that a lot. He even showed me his wallet full of CFA 10000 [$17] notes to tempt me. He bought chicken for me, and I ate very well. There was even some left over. Me I took the rest to come and give to my children. That man, he said he wanted to suck my anus, and he will give me 50000 CFA [$90]. All this because of my eyes. He even offered me a motorbike! I didn't want to do that and get a disease. But there are women whose husbands don't give them anything, so they go into the maquis to hide and do. When I came to tell my girlfriend, she said why didn't I agree to eat the money. That I don't want the money. That it had already happened to her and she took the money. That if she finds herself in this position, she knows what she's going to tell her husband. Another girlfriend said the same thing. She herself said that her husband is afraid of her. She said that since the Christmas holidays, her husband has not even given her CFA 5 [$ 0.009]. Me I want money, but I am afraid. People like that*

walk with guns. Even if it is to drink beer, I am afraid. If you drink a lot, they will put something in your drink" (Fieldwork interview with Tantie, 11th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Tantie's story highlights the kind of opportunities that may come along with having 'Eyes of love' in the maquis. It also shed light on the fact that many women's aspirational maps, pathways and nodes are thinner than more affluent people (Appadurai, 2004). For women who were financially dependent on their husbands, attracting financial gains and gifts from men in a maquis in exchange for sexual favours was a navigational practice. This source of revenue often came in handy when their husband was unable to provide them with enough money to sustain themselves and their household. In this manner, makeup was women's way of expanding their capacity to aspire, a way to escape precarity. Still, it must be noted that there were many women who, like Tantie, *ate small*. As Tantie further explained during our conversation, *eating small* involved accepting only drinks and food from potential suitors in the maquis without exchanging sexual favours. *Eating small* also meant dismissing aspirations such as having a motorbike or pocketing CFA 50000 [$90] in a day, a way of making up by preserving one from potential harm associated with the risks of accepting gifts from men in the maquis.

3.5.3. The Queen of the Maquis

While recounting a day she went to work with full face makeup, that is, eyelash extensions, foundation, and red lipstick, Fatou mentioned that she felt like a star. On that day, she gained a massive amount of attention from clients, who showered her with opportunities in the form of money and compliments. Reminiscent of her moment of fame, she explained:

"All eyes were on me; they were calling me from left to right. The money came in that day oh. It was magical. People loved my makeup, that it is very pretty, that I am very beautiful. There are customers who told me that they come here but they never noticed me. Although I started working a long time ago. That if it's not today they've never seen me here. In any case that day in the maquis, it was hot! Makeup is like an attraction. When you wear it, you attract a lot of eyes. It is very good, when you wear it you are noticed. It is because of this that people start to compliment it. The makeup brings out

the beauty of the African woman. When I do my makeup, I get more tips. I become like a queen. That day, I was the queen of the maquis. It was very exciting. It was magical" (Field interview with Fatou, 4th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

In her account, Fatou illustrates the affective dimension of wearing makeup in the maquis. As mentioned earlier, makeup acted as a transformative power through which Fatou could embody her aspirational self, thus benefiting from the financial and social capital that came with wearing makeup.

3.6. Skin: "*I am not black; I am not light. I just shine a little bit"*

In this subsection, the aspiration for a shiny or brown face is discussed using the work of Lynn Thomas on the psychosocial history of skin lightening in both the United States and South Africa. Here, as the subtitle phrase by Nafissatou implies, people's affinity for a brown/tanned or shiny face is observed with the use of technologies such as skin lightening creams, foundation, and *Djabi* [red henna], providing insights on the ontological split between women's skin and their aspirational skin tone. Through this analysis, the face of the maquis girl (see figure 1) is used as a heuristic device to reflect on Burkinabe beauty ideals in relation to the 'Modern Girl' image discussed by Alys E. et al. (2008).

3.6.1 Black Skin, Brown Mask

In contemporary West Africa, the juxtaposition of beauty and prosperity with light-coloured skin derives from the dominance of global white supremacy, stretching back to the age of the transatlantic slave trade and European colonialism (Pierre, 2008; Blay and Charles, 2011; Thomas, 2020). However, some participants aspired for brown or tanned skin, like the maquis woman on *figure 1*, rather than a white face. In response to this observation, Dosekun (2016) argues that the empirical claim that black women aspire to be white is oversimplified. Similarly, in Jamaica, cultural study scholars have argued that "skin bleaching should not be interpreted as a quest for whiteness but rather in relation to the privileged Jamaican identity of "browning" or mixed race" (Thomas, 2020:19; Brown-Glaude, 2007). Using makeup technologies such as

red henna, skin lightening creams, and foundation, research participants sought to attract opportunities by maintaining sexual and romantic attention from suitors or marital partners.
While speaking about her clients' makeup preference, Marlette told me the story of a woman who wanted a 'flashy' face makeup. With an amused tone, she explained:

> *"She [the client] was very dark but she wanted a brown complexion. So, I tried to camouflage her face and neck a bit with the brown foundation. But it's not even hard to find black foundation. The ones who want to be light are usually the ones who use skin lighteners"* (Field interview with Marlette, 15th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Still on clients' request for a lighter skin, Latifa mentions:

> *"All the time I have clients who want to be lighter and when they come, they say, 'Don't make me black oh!', But they are black! But the customer is king, so I do it for them. Women with a dark complexion don't love themselves. It's because they promote the light complexion everywhere on TV and everything. For example, when you walk with a black woman, men tend to call the lighter women"* (Field interview with Latifa, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

As Thomas (2020:15) points out, "cosmetics companies are unusually dependent on cultivating desire and selling hope". Indeed, since the beginning of my fieldwork in Ouagadougou, I observed that skin lightening products advertisements were very frequent on the national TV station. They usually featured a young woman attaining opportunities such as a job offer or a romantic partner thanks to her light brown and glowing skin.
The women I worked with did not necessarily condemn skin lightening. For them, the secret to beautiful and shiny brown skin was about finding the 'right' cream. In their experience, some creams gave them pimples, while the 'right' ones made them shine. Yet, finding the 'right' cream was often tricky. While showing me her skincare creams at her house in Zongo, Vivi, a 33-year-old woman working as a waitress in the maquis, said to me:

"Me, my natural skin colour is a bit brown but not as light as my current complexion. I used to use Carowhite but I stopped because it didn't go with my skin. It used to give me pimples. Now I use Lemon Clear. It's good with my skin. There's also its oil that I mix with the cream. It has its soap too" (Field interview with Vivi, 21st January 2121, Ouagadougou).

On the other hand, Fatou used a cream called *Clair Lisse*. During our first interview, she complained about the non-uniformity of her face's skin tone, as some areas of her face were lighter than others. While looking into her mirror, she stated:

"I want a cream that suits me. The one that tans me. For tanning, when you are black and you use it, it shines! There are some creams that do that for you. It makes your skin shine like that!" (Field interview with Fatou, 12th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

In his work with the Congolese *sapeurs*, young men in precarious conditions who wore designer clothes and often lightened their skin, Jonathan Friedman explains that the young men's desire to shine is an aspiration to long-standing central African aesthetics that equate luminescent appearances with the accumulation of 'life force' (Friedman, 2005; Thomas, 2020:19). Similarly, a shiny face in Ouagadougou was often synonymous with a beautiful and healthy face, and by default, a source of social capital.

Fatou further complained about her pimples and wondered if it was because of the lightening cream she used. Research participants had little to no information about what the cream they used did to their body beyond browning, information often depicted through the picture of a young and light-skinned woman on the cream's container, as *figure 5* below illustrates.

Figure 5. Jaune d'oeuf lightening cream in Safi's home.

This lack of information made choosing the 'right' cream a daunting task. Some women mentioned that even when they thought the cream was not a skin lightening cream, it still lightened their skin because "that's [skin lightening creams] what's everywhere" (Nafissatou, 21st December 2020, Ouagadougou).

With Nafissatou, our first conversation about choosing skin lightening creams was triggered by another conversation she had with her kiosk neighbours, who brought her attention to a pale white mark on the right side of her face, near her ear. She had the same kind of mark on her left shoulder as well. I could see that Nafissatou was bothered by what her neighbours said about her skin as she was unusually quiet. She showed me pictures of her face from a few months back on her phone and mentioned that she had noticed a tiny white dot on her left shoulder since then, which is why she stopped using the cream *Cocoa Bronze*. She added that she used Avo Vita as a young girl, but it started leaving black marks on her legs, so she changed her cream. Now that those white dots had started appearing on her shoulders and ear, she was frustrated and confused. Remembering a conversation with her cream seller at the Zongo market, Nafissatou mentioned that she suspects all creams are "éclaircissantes" [lightening]. She recounts a day where she asked her seller to give her oil that does not make her light, but when he gave her the cream, there was a light-skinned woman's picture on the box. Confused, she asked about the picture. The cream seller replied that if there were a dark-skinned lady on

the container, nobody would buy it. He added that he showed her that cream because she asked for non-lightening oil. According to the seller, that specific kind of cream was not produced in huge quantities because *"it doesn't do the job properly"*. However, he confessed that he likes to leave those creams on the shelves because some women buy them as they see the lightskinned lady on the containers. After a long sigh, Nafissatou added: *"Anyway, men love lightskinned women. That's why".*

3.6.2 Djabi [Red Henna]

Apart from skin lightening creams, some women used red henna as a face mask to make their faces brown and shiny. In preparing the face mask, henna leaves were dried, ground, then mixed with water to form a thick paste used for the face later. The red henna being a dye, it made a face slightly browner. While visiting Ria, a maquis waitress I worked with, I found that she had smeared a brown paste all over her face. When I asked her what it was, she said: *"It's djabi [red henna], it makes your skin brown and shiny"*. However, Djeneba, a 35-year-old woman living in Zongo with her four sons and husband, believed that women used *djabi* because of 'poverty':

> *"Some wear it as a face scrub because if you don't have money for the real face scrub, you use djabi. If you have money, you can go to the supermarket to buy proper face cleansers. As for me, I've never had that kind of money so I'm not sure. Some people say when you wear it, it makes your face clear like a newly wedded woman. In my opinion, people wear the henna because there's no money"* (Fieldwork interview with Djeneba, 11th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

This differentiation between henna and "proper face cleansers" highlights the tensions and power dynamics between local and global technologies of the skin. As pointed out by Djeneba, many women aspired to use global technologies of the skin found in supermarkets. These cosmetics were markers of modernity and often indicators of socio-economic status.

3.7. Makeup and Respectability

The women I worked with acknowledged the spatiality of makeup in choosing how to adorn their face. This enabled them to navigate respectability by anticipating the kind of audience they might interact with. As such, 'inner eyes' judgment also varied depending on sociospatiality. For Ela, 'bright' makeup was only respectable during events such as weddings or christening. Women who wore bright makeup everywhere were perceived as promiscuous. She posits:

> *"I have different makeup for different places...It's depending on the clothing. In some places, when you get there, you're the one who is seen because of the bright makeup. Like in ceremonies, like christening or weddings. But if for example I go to the market I just put eyepencil. When you put on too much makeup, we find that it's like the girls who work in the maquis. When we see the maquis girls, we think that they are 'filles de joie' [promiscuous women]. On the other hand, there are others who are in the maquis but they are not necessarily like that. But some of them sell themselves; they exchange their bodies for money. They sell their bodies. Even at Zongo market when you see them they dress and they makeup well, they also bleach their skin and their skin turns into many colours, and they put on a lot of makeup. And so, when you put that on, it sends people back to that image of the maquis girl and people don't have too much respect for you"* (Fieldwork interview with Ela, 7th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

While having a conversation with a maquis client about makeup and respectability, he said to me:

> *"For those fake eyelashes I love them on my pute [bitch]. My wife, in my opinion, does not need to wear makeup even when we go out"* (Fieldwork interview with maquis client, 13th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

The women I worked with considered eyeliner to be more respectable than eyelashes and eye shadows because eyeliner was more subtle and attracted less attention. As a respectable woman, one did not need to attract much attention because it could attract 'bad eyes'.

For Safi, the way that she presented herself was crucial in the maquis. During an interview over a bottle of beer, she mentioned:

> *"I don't want to wear makeup. If I put this on, that's how people will look at you. If you put makeup on, not everyone will take you seriously. I also don't change my cream. I don't want to become light. The day I'm happy I can put on powder"* (Field interview with Safi, 24th December 2020).

Conscious and cautious of what is at stake when one morphs their face through makeup, Ela mentions:

> *"You know, makeup depends on where you're going. For example, when you go to an interview, you can put on a dress that is too plated, with a slit on the thigh, it's not nice for an interview. Even if you had no intention of what the person thinks, he will think otherwise, that you came to harass him. For the makeup, in my opinion it's like that. For me, as my man is not here, I decided not to wear makeup. It's when he's here that I wear makeup because he likes it. When he is here, I wear makeup, I make myself beautiful, I often put on nails and so on. But when he's not here, I don't think I have to do all that".* When I asked her if makeup was solely for her husband, she said: *"Well to bring out the beauty is not only for him, there is also society, but well, it is necessary that he finds me as beautiful as he found me at the beginning [of the relationship]"* (Field interview with Ela, 8th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

For Ela, makeup habits solely depended on where one wants their interlocutor's attention to go. Elaborating on the image that bright makeup conveys, she continues:

> *"He [her husband] doesn't like it when it's too visible. Just don't put on too much eye shadow. The lipsticks are too bright. I prefer it light. When you wear too much makeup you think it's like the girls who work in the maquis. For clothing and makeup, it has to go with the society you are in. But when you are with your husband, you can do that. But when you're in the office, you don't need that attention"* (Field interview with Ela, 8th January 2021, Ouagadougou)..

Bintou Ma, just like Ela, believed makeup inspired respect and maintained her relationship with her husband:

"If a woman wears makeup, she is respected by other women. If you shower, wear nice clothes, make up, perfume and heels, people will even get up for you to sit when you enter a room. But makeup like eye shadow that one is for pogsadaba [Young women, often working at the maquis]. For me I don't like eye shadows because it's too much. I also don't like lipstick or fake eyelashes unless my husband is around because if you don't wear makeup, if your husband goes out and sees women outside wearing makeup, he will follow them. But if you wear makeup in the house, he won't go out. So, since the women outside wear makeup, I will also wear makeup".

Through makeup, married women sought to nurture their relationship with their husband by simulating the maquis woman image. However, a makeup that was 'too much' was respectable only if done for their husbands, within the confines of their home. Outside, if one was not attending a wedding or a christening ceremony, wearing 'too much' makeup, that is, eyeshadow, eyelash extensions, foundation, and lipstick would be considered promiscuous and unworthy of respect, unless it is a wedding or a Christening ceremony. Indeed, makeup artists, who only did full face makeup for their clients were mostly solicitated for weddings and Christening ceremonies.

3.8. Makeup and Precarity: Eating Through One's Face

The women I worked with acknowledged the spatiality of makeup in choosing how to adorn their faces. This consciousness enabled them to navigate respectability by anticipating the people with whom they might interact. As such, 'inner eyes' judgment also varied depending on socio-spatiality. For Ela, 'bright' makeup was only respectable during events such as weddings or christening. Women who wore bright makeup everywhere were perceived as promiscuous. She posits:

"I have different makeup for different places... It's depending on the clothing. In some places, when you get there, you're the one who is seen because of the bright makeup. Like in ceremonies, like christening or weddings. But if for example I go to the market

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"I don't want to wear makeup. If I put this on, that's how people will look at you. If you put makeup on, not everyone will take you seriously. I also don't change my cream. I don't want to become light. The day I'm happy I can put on powder" (Field interview with Safi, 24th December 2020).

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"You know, makeup depends on where you're going. For example, when you go to an interview, you can put on a dress that is too plated, with a slit on the thigh, it's not nice

for an interview. Even if you had no intention of what the person thinks, he will think otherwise, that you came to harass him. For the makeup, in my opinion it's like that. For me, as my man is not here, I decided not to wear makeup. It's when he's here that I wear makeup because he likes it. When he is here, I wear makeup, I make myself beautiful, I often put on nails and so on. But when he's not here, I don't think I have to do all that". When I asked her if makeup was solely for her husband, she said: *"Well to bring out the beauty is not only for him, there is also society, but well, he must find me as beautiful as he found me at the beginning [of the relationship]"* (Field interview with Ela, 8th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

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Through makeup, married women sought to nurture their relationship with their husbands by simulating the maquis woman image. However, makeup that was 'too much' was respectable only within the confines of their home. Such makeup was believed to be solely for their husbands. Outside of the home, if one was not attending a wedding or a christening ceremony, wearing 'too much' makeup, eyeshadow, eyelash extensions, foundation, and lipstick would be considered promiscuous and unworthy of respect unless it is a wedding or a christening ceremony. Indeed, makeup artists who only did full face makeup for their clients mainly were solicited for weddings and Christening ceremonies.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that facial makeup plays a critical role in asserting the dynamism and nuances of post-colonial female ontologies. Throughout this chapter, it has been proven that eye and skin makeup can beautify women's lives by attracting opportunities through suitors. In Ouagadougou, women transformed their ontologies by *changing their looks* to access their aspirational selves. Via facial makeup. People produced and gathered knowledge about themselves and others. Hence the decision to makeup (or not) their skin and eyes was shaped by women's bodily capital and whether they "*ate through their face*", like the maquis women or hairdresser.

Moreover, unless they were attending a wedding or christening ceremony, full-face makeup evoked the image of the maquis woman, a symbol of female promiscuity in the Burkinabe popular imagination. Finally, as the chapter suggests, women who could not afford makeup found other ways such as *sanyani* [cleanliness] to access beauty. The following chapter further explores the techniques through which women who *"eat through their face"* access opportunities by making up in the maquis.

Chapter 4: Makeup and Making up in the Maquis

4.1. Summary

This final chapter provides a detailed examination of the chaotic and ordered nature of the art of maquis through a discussion on how maquis waitresses, as maquis artists, negotiate their precarious work environment to embody their aspirations and satisfy maquis customers. By addressing various making up techniques, research participants made up their lives by maintaining convivial relationships in the maquis. The chapter equally sheds light on the affective dimensions of the art of maquis in those women's lives. Here, the art of maquis is characterized through techniques such as "flatter" [dribbling], among others, to illustrate how women navigate the jerky waters of the maquis *Le navire de la cite*.

4.2. Introduction

The heterotopic nature of the maquis exposes the technologies of the self employed by women in Ouagadougou. These technologies reveal immense knowledge on female ontologies in Ouagadougou. Although Foucault (1984) first discussed heterotopias in the context of grammar, in a famous lecture, *Of Other Spaces*, delivered to architects, he demonstrated the malleability of the concept by applying the same idea to physical places. As mentioned in the thesis' introduction, the maquis as a heterotopia was made up with variegated walls and paintings of men drinking beer and maquis women serving beer (see thesis cover photo). Occasionally, maquis walls also had paintings of musical instruments such as the saxophone. The maquis' walls, just like many women's faces, was covered with makeup explicitly suited for its audience and impression. The maquis I worked in was a space engorging a formal and an informal economy. The formal economy concerned the sale of beer and food. The informal economy was characterized by a display of eyeshadow, *tatouage* [Black henna], and eyelash extensions as visibility technologies to attract some male clients' tips and favours, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Many waitresses carried little bags where they stored all their makeup technologies. Street hawkers, being aware of this market often passed by the maquis to sell eyeshadows, foundation, and other technologies of visibility that fueled this informal economy.

Women in the maquis constantly had to navigate the space, utilizing facial adornment and other techniques such as *flatter* to sustain a convivial relationship with clients from whom they get good tips. Being a waitress in the maquis entailed falling under the bracket of flexible labour and insecure employment in a neoliberal labour market condition (Butler, 2012; Lee and Kofman, 2012; Waite, 2009). Speaking to the condition of youth unemployment in Burkina, Ria, mentioned that waitressing in the maquis was one of the very few options for survival as a young woman with kids. She further shared:

> *"In Ouagadougou here, it's the maquis work that's the easiest. Even the people who went to school push barrels, how much more of us? We must forget what people say if we want to eat, especially if you have kids, what will you do?"* (Field notes, 17th December 2021, Ouagadougou).

As Ria expressed, the maquis waitresses I worked with found themselves at the margin of global capitalism (Saul, 2001). Analyzing the art of maquis using the lens of precarity helps us understand the pragmatism of makeup and making up beyond the popular *fille de joie [promiscuous women]* narrative of the maquis woman. Women in the maquis wore makeup to attract clients' attention from whom they could potentially gain some extra money, usually through *avoirs [drink switching]* and maintain conviviality through *flatter.*

4.3. Making up as *Flatter*: Only 'no' brings trouble

Flatter [flattery] as a making up technique in the maquis was women's way of navigating the maquis' precarity. To nurture a peaceful environment in the maquis, waitresses had to be compliant and respectful to clients. *Flatter* required the concealment of the waitresses' true intentions toward a client to fuel their hope of spending a night or going on a date with them.

As Vivi said, *"It is 'no' that brings trouble".* In the maquis, waitresses avoided saying 'no' or rejecting clients' advances by fear of frustrating them before they got a tip or a gift. Regarding Vivi's comment, Fatou also held a similar view about making up in the maquis as she affirmed: *"It is often necessary to lie to arrange".* Conscious of the necessity to keep a customer happy by entertaining and fuelling their fantasy of spending the night with them, waitresses usually smile as much as possible with clients, regardless of how disrespectful they could be towards

them. In the maquis, successful navigation highly depended on the clients' satisfaction. As such, one had to be a true expert at concealing and beautifying situations. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, calling clients' cheri' was flattery in the maquis. The waitresses' job demanded constant navigation between several cheris. While explaining how she maintained conviviality with her 'cheris' [clients] in the maquis, Vivi, along with other waitresses, navigated monogamous ideals:

> *"For those cheris, for example, if I'm in the maquis, there are many clients I sit with, but I have only one boyfriend. If you say you don't have a boyfriend, many people will want to be with you. But if you like the client, you can accept him. He won't be your husband, but you can be together. You tell them that you are with someone already, but if they want to be with you, you must warn them not to fight when they see you with other people. You tell him you can only be together if he accepts that. So, if he comes and sees you with someone else, he will be careful. He can't do anything. You tell the same thing to all the clients you like. So that's how you manage them"* (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 13 February 2021, Ouagadougou).

To manage clients' romantic advances, waitresses often had to pretend to have a boyfriend. By accepting illegitimacy, maquis clients lost their right to claim waitresses as their cherie, which avoided potential conflicts publicly. When they saw the waitress, they wanted sitting with another man, they assumed it was their boyfriend and remained calm to maintain the hope of spending the night with the waitress. Recounting an unfortunate event, Vivi affirms that men also use flatter as a making up technique to lure maquis waitresses into their beds. This often involved empty promises for a better life:

> "*Me, my job, it's tiring and if you're not careful, you will get a disease. The man will flatter you, tell you he will do many things for you. If you give yourself to him, he will ruin you*" (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

During another interview, she also mentioned that she doesn't like young clients because they too, are experts at the art of maquis. She recounts a day she spent a night with a young client:

> *"In the morning, I went to take a shower in his bathroom. When I came back, he gave me CFA 5000 [$9]. I was happy. When I got back home, I realized that he had taken the CFA 5000 from my handbag while I was showering. Imagine, he stole from me to pay me! I never saw him again. But at least, the sex was good. But these days, if I see a man young client like that one, I don't want"* (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 1st February 2021, Ouagadougou).

To be a good maquis artist, Vivi asserts that one had to become a new person, not only by making up their face, but by making up their behaviour, but also highlight the anxieties of doing so:

> "*When you are in the maquis, you have to change your way of being to earn money in the maquis. You must leave all your home teachings. But really there is no future in this job. When I'm too old, I won't be able to work anymore. If I'm not married, I can't go to my father's house anyway. If I sit alone, people will say I'm a witch. If I'm blessed enough for my kids to be successful, I'll be okay at least. If not, nobody will care"* (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Many maquis clients I spoke to believed that most waitresses never use their real name. For waitresses who did not want their family to find out about their work for fear of being tagged as a *bordel* [promiscuous woman], changing their names and embracing a new identity made it easier to perform. Moreover, Vivi and Fatou mentioned that their families did not know that they work in a maquis. Given the social precarity of being a maquis waitress, Vivi concealed the truth by telling her family that she sold vegetables in the Zongo market. For waitresses whose families lived in Ouagadougou, choosing to work in a maquis far away from their family's area was crucial to maximize the concealment of the truth. Vivi's statement above also reflects the prevalent interdependence and intersubjectivity in the Burkinabe society. As my aunt mentioned, the family was the seed of society. Women without families were socially ostracised and even thought to be witches, as Vivi mentioned. This stigmatisation fuelled many waitresses desire to get married but also to maintain conviviality within their family. On the other hand, I observed that *flatter* was not restricted to the spatial limits of the maquis. While discussing conflict resolution between men and women, especially for people involved in a

relationship, Ela discusses the art of maquis through *flatter,* by suggesting that dialogue is better in bed*:*

> *"We say sweet nothings to each other. The African woman is always submissive. You should not try to force. The man, it is you who educates him in your way. You speak to him with a certain gentleness, instead of shouting"* (Fieldwork interview with Ela, 5th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

This submission to men was an essential aspect of daily practices of the art of maquis among the women I worked with. Constantly walking on eggshells to access opportunities through clients or husbands, women flattered their way to happiness.

4.3.1. Phone Calls: "Allo Cheri?"

In the maquis, waitresses sold the hope of having a sexual encounter with clients. Although they did not always obtain what they desired, they also enjoyed the attention and care that came with flattery. As mentioned by Ela in the previous section, *flatter* entailed *sweet-talking* the client into believing that their desire would have been satisfied if only they were not *"sick"* or had not gone *"to see their brother at the hospital"*, or better still, if they did not have to *"go to their uncle's funeral"*. Although this *sweet talk* also took place in the maquis, it was often facilitated by the phone. Elaborating on this, Ria highlights:

> *"You only flatter them. If they say you must call them when you get off so you can go home together, you say yes, there's no problem, but we'll see where they'll catch you. When they come back, and complain about not seeing you, you say 'Oh, see my phone, it doesn't work. We will meet on my day off'"* (Fieldnotes, 14th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

When conducting interviews with waitresses in their homes, we would frequently be interrupted by phone calls from clients in the maquis. There, I often witnessed the art of maquis performances first-hand. The following extract from my fieldnotes during an interview with Vivi illustrates this performance:

> *"Interrupted by phone call. As soon as she picked up the phone, Vivi slightly lowered her voice and said: 'Hey cheri, yes, my phone was not going through". She continued, "My battery was low, I am sorry. I am at work, you can come'. When she hung up, she confessed that she had no idea who she was talking to and said she will know when she sees him in the maquis. We both laughed at this, and she added, 'Many people have my number. A little after, another client called her. She said to him: 'I am at work, I went to buy food, I'll come' [we were seated in her living room at home]. When she hung up, she kissed her teeth. She confessed that she doesn't like him but she will go flatter him and get something even if it's CFA 500 [$1]"* (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 26th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

In studying mobile phone practices in Inhambane, Archambault (2017) investigates ways of knowing and not knowing. The 'ugly truth' was concealed through the phone, where concealment was synonymous with respect. As such, using the phone as a makeup tool, young people in Inhambane, just like maquis artists, maintained concealed the truth via their phone and simultaneously sustained conviviality.

Fatou's experience concurred with Vivi's. Our interviews were equally interrupted by phone calls from clients: During one of our interviews, she promised one of her clients in a soft and soothing voice:

> *"We will look for a day when we'll be comfortable without disturbance. I'll look for a good day to meet, don't worry"* (Hanging out with Fatou, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

After the phone call, she told me she spoke to a client who wanted to go for a rendez-vous with her. Still staring at her phone, she added:

> *"They really think that people in the maquis have nothing else to do if not this. I flatter but it's not easy. Even my boyfriend and I have fights about it when he comes to the maquis, and he sees me serving other men. I can't sit with him alone, so it creates little arguments between us. He says that my number has become popular. I told him that if we didn't give out numbers, he wouldn't have gotten mine"* (Hanging out with Fatou, 8th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

In the maquis, flatter was an essential making up technique to avoid client disappointment and access opportunities. Waitresses had an obligation to make sure that every client was treated like a king. During my first days in the maquis, the manager was very explicit about treating clients well, even if I was not a waitress. He urged me to listen to them and never directly refuse any advance from clients. As discussed in the second chapter, on instances where I continuously rejected a client's advances to be his cherie, the client lost interest and never came back to the maquis.

4.3.2. Drink switching

Drink switching was another way of getting by in the maquis. Waitresses often sat with the cheri at a table and entertained them through flatteries or casual conversations. As they conversed and spent more time together, the clients often consumed more drinks and bought drinks for the waitress. While waitresses often drank those drinks, they also made sure to keep some bottles closed to resell them at the maquis counter. This technique was a significant source of income for many waitresses. Reflecting on her experience, Fatou highlights:

> *"In the maquis, If I go and sit there, I will take a drink, if I go and sit over there I will take another drink. The little bit that I take and I don't drink, it's the money. I have a system that not everyone knows. The others can agree to go and do [have sex] but I never went out with someone, but it's not easy. I have to smile and lie to get by. You become a professional liar. If you don't lie it's not good. Sometimes I say my phone doesn't work. But it pays. For example, on Saturday I left with CFA 5000 [$9], Sunday I left with CFA 5000 on Monday too. I can come and sit with you, but when I sit there, it's out of interest. When I'm sitting there, it's a lot of calculations! You can tell me to go and serve myself, I'll say okay, but I'm not going to take the drink there. He [the client] gives me the money, I pocket it and I say eh, I'm not thirsty anymore, I'll take the drink after. But sometimes if I know that there are not many customers in the maquis, I drink"* (Fieldwork interview with Fatou, 5th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Fatou's experience illustrates the way maquis artists make up through drinks in the maquis. By constantly navigating between their interests, that of the clients' and being mindful of the

maquis' welfare, waitresses have to do constant *calculations* to access the opportunities they yearn for.

In discussing how she makes up in response to clients who insist on buying only alcoholic beverages for waitresses, Vivi mentions:

"There are some clients who say they don't buy soft drinks for women. Only beer. Because they know that the causeries [discussion] would be nice if we both drink and you might not refuse him. But me, sometimes, what I do is I rub salt powder on my feet. This prevents me from getting drunk. Even if you drink 15 beers. You take the salt powder, mix it with a little water, and rub it on your feet until it dries, so the day they want to force you, they'll get drunk alone" (Fieldwork interview, 14th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Drinks constituted an essential source of revenue for both the maquis and its artists. Although clients, waitresses, and the maquis tended to have divergent interests, making up techniques such as drink switching or salting one's feet facilitated conviviality by virtue of concealing the intricate meaning behind unopened beer bottles on a table or an empty glass.

4.4. Respectability in the Maquis: "Tighten and Loosen Up"

In establishing notions of morality in the maquis, its ordered and chaotic nature was often considered. This involved navigating through ideals of morality and catering to clients' demand for the promise and hope of a sexual escapade with a waitress. The manager described this navigation as *"Tightening and loosening up".* As a businessman managing waitresses that satisfied the clients' sexual fantasies was great publicity for the maquis as it attracted clients, but he was also worried about the maquis becoming like an "Allah te Coman" [God does not speak, a brothel disguised as a maquis]. Speaking to this, he says: *"Everyone knows that women in there can be picked up easily. This isn't the culture we're trying to create here"*(Fieldwork interview with manager, 23rd December 2020, Ouagadougou).

As much as attracting many clients would be great business for the maquis, the maquis manager still cared about their social image and reputation. They wanted to be a 'respectable maquis'. As such, the manager often encouraged waitresses to be more discreet about the client's intimate activities, thereby concealing and making up their behaviour to prioritize respectability. As the manager explained, *"I don't care what they do after their shift. But it's*

important for the maquis' reputation that they don't leave with clients during their shift when everyone is here" (Fieldwork interview with manager, 23rd December 2020, Ouagadougou). Similarly, women working in the maquis also found ways of navigating respectability as they were aware of the social stigma attached to their job. Still, they found ways remain respectable in the eyes of the people they cared about. As hinted above, many waitresses had fake names and told their families they were either working in a restaurant or at the market, selling food. Speaking to this, Vivi expresses the need to work far from home:

> *"I was born in Sans pedro [Ivory Coast]. Everyone knew my family there so I couldn't work in a maquis there. I went to Yamoussoukro to work in a maquis. Here, because all my brother does is to roam around maquis, gambling, and drinking, he, unfortunately saw me here one day. Now, he also blackmails me. If I don't pay him what he wants, he will go tell my family home that I work in a maquis. My father's in Ghoughin thinks I sell vegetables in the market. So I always take some vegetables home when I go to visit. I think if my mum did not die, and my parents had stayed together, I would not have been here*" (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 23rd January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Similarly, Fatou is Burkinabe but was born and raised in Côte d'ivoire, in Marcory, then she moved to Cocody. After her father's death, she moved to Burkina in November 2017. She was working with her big sister in her restaurant. This did not go well as they were fighting all the time. She then decided to move to Zongo to work for herself. Speaking to her work in the maquis, she adds: *"My family doesn't know I work in a maquis. When they ask me, I say that I am still in the catering business"* (Field interview with Fatou, 23rd January 2021, Ouagadougou). Fatou lived in a small room right in front of a primary school. Her roommate and her also sold groundnuts on a small table in front of the house. Still, in the pursuit of respectability, she told people that she lives with her big sister. She explains:

> *"People will think that when a young woman lives with her friends, there is no authority, which might encourage clients in the maquis to come to my home and disrespect me. Even my boyfriend thinks I live with my sister. When you say that girls live together there, they will imagine things. They go out at night, there is no one to*

scold them, so they won't take you seriously" (Field interview with Fatou, 23rd January 2021, Ouagadougou).

For Fatou, phones also played a crucial role in concealing the truth and maintaining respect. During our interviews, Fatou often received phone calls from her friends and family. After speaking to a friend on the phone, she confessed:

"Even my friend doesn't know that I work in a maquis. She thinks I work in a restaurant. I told her that because working in a maquis doesn't look like something I would do" (Fieldwork interview, 13th January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Like all waitresses in the maquis, Fatou saw herself as a respectable woman who was often misjudged. Hence, she felt compelled to conceal the 'ugly' truth, perceived as a temporal truth. All the maquis women I worked with equally viewed their time in the maquis as a temporary period before falling back on their feet. Until then, they enjoyed discussing their plans for a respectable and beautiful future.

4.5. The Maquis Artist: Dreams and Aspirations

The women I worked with viewed family as a means of accessing opportunity. They often discussed the future in terms of matrimony and family as they believed this was the most sustainable way to make up their lives. Although they longed for financial independence, they still expected the men in their lives to facilitate those aspirations. When I asked Vivi about her husband, she said:

"Even the father of my kids is not my husband. If he was my husband, he would have known that he has a wife. He is not my husband. He is my boyfriend. If he was my husband, he would have looked for a job for me instead of letting me work at the maquis" (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 16th February 2021, Ouagadogou).

After a short pause, she took a sip of her beer and added:

"Many years ago, a man deceived me to go to Ghana with him. But his place was in a village far away. I even used to go to the field with him. He didn't want to marry me so

I escaped. Sometimes when I sit down and think, you can't think too much. But I'm counting on my current boyfriend, the driver. Maybe he will help me. I know a woman who told me she's even more tired than me. She suffered a lot, but her children helped her. Today if you enter her house you won't want to get out" (Fieldwork interview with Vivi, 16th February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Speaking to the idea that kids as future caretakers, Bintou Ma also points out:

"It is God who gives. I have children because when I get old, my children will come with the food to take care of me" (Fieldwork interview, 23rd January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Apart from matrimony and children, women in the maquis aspired for different jobs. While discussing dreams and the future, Fatou said to me:

"I told you about my restaurant that I wanted to open. I'm looking for a corner that's well placed. I even asked the manager. But I pretended to be someone else so as not to arouse suspicion. I made him believe that it was a sister who was looking for a place. A place like pissy is good. It is my cheri who will help me to start. He's nice anyway. When I wanted to work in the maquis he refused. He said that working in the maquis is not respectable, that they consider us as pute [whores]. But as I didn't want to depend on him, you can't be the one who is always asking, you have to fight too"(Hanging out session with Fatou, 3rd February 2021, Ouagadougou).

Similarly, Fatou wanted her financial independence but did not mind the help of her cheri. Still, in looking for a locale to set up her restaurant, she chose to conceal the truth from the maquis manager for fear of losing her job. In that light, women utilized the art of maquis to access their future aspirations.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter explored making up as a navigational practice in the maquis. By mastering flatter and drink switching techniques, maquis waitresses found ways to make up the ugly truth by prioritizing conviviality over reality. This examination of the chaotic and ordered nature of the maquis provided insights into the inherently chaotic nature of the art of maquis, whereby women ought to constantly conceal the truth and morph their behaviour to appeal to a specific audience that makeup aspects of their identity. As such, by shedding light on making up practices in the maquis, this chapter revealed how maquis artists navigated the kaleidoscopic facets of their subjectivity and aspirations to beautify their lives, to survive another day without conflict. Cognisant that embracing reality may be fatal, the women I worked with constantly thrived on maintaining a great relationship with the people they depended on to get by. In that light, makeup and making up were survival tools women used to conceal past mistakes, beautify their present experiences, and ensure a better future.

Chapter 5: Conclusion- Make Up, Making Up and Made Up Femininities

This thesis has demonstrated that thinking from and through the maquis facilitates an analysis of the dynamism and nuances of post-colonial female subjectivities, critically putting into question many popular imaginaries of urban African women's femininities. Through an ethnography of facial and behavioural adornment techniques among women in Ouagadougou, the thesis has provided a way to understand morphing spatiotemporal ontologies shaped by local, regional, and global doxa. This exploration of "secret passages" (Voegelin *et al.*, 2012:425) in Latourian terms has revealed how women navigate gendered subjectivities and precarity using technologies and techniques of concealment. The examination of femininity through the employment of technologies of visibility in the maquis creates an avenue to move beyond local binaries such as maquis girls versus married women by revealing the intimate desires and aspirations shared among women in Ouagadougou. Hence, by tracing patterns of makeup and making up practices across different spheres in Ouagadougou, this monograph has contributed to the thin body of academic literature on contemporary aesthetics of existence in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Moreover, the consideration of the maquis as a heterotopia has facilitated the revelation of the chaotic nature of the art of maquis, where reality is constantly concealed and revealed, exposing deep connections between people and places that are seemingly different at surface-level analysis.

In terms of facial makeup, thinking from the maquis has also revealed not only the pragmatic use of eye makeup and skin lightening among women in Ouagadougou but also how global capitalism and white supremacy manifest in this corner of the world. *Changer le regard* [Changing the look], changing one's way of seeing and being seen, was essential in the way women morphed their ontologies to access their aspirational self. Through their eyes, people produced and gathered knowledge about themselves and others (Lawal, 2001). Although research participants were not explicitly against skin lightening, they had little to no information about the affective dimension of the cream they used, beyond browning, a piece of information often depicted through the picture of a young and light-skinned woman on the cream's container. Through makeup, married women sought to nurture their relationship with their husbands by simulating the maquis woman image, the Burkinabe version of the 'Modern

Girl' (Alys E. et al., 2008). However, 'too much' makeup, that is, eyeshadow, eyelash extensions, foundation, and lipstick, was considered promiscuous and unworthy of respect. For many women who did not *eat with their face*, that is, use cosmetics for their work, like maquis waitresses did, makeup and being beautiful (*Nagam*) was considered a luxury. More so, beauty was synonymous to being wealthy. In Ouagadougou, facial and behavioural concealment techniques went hand in hand. This study demonstrated that women used making up techniques such as *flatter* and *avoir* [bottle switching] in the maquis to maintain convivial relationships with clients, boyfriends, husbands, and family. By navigating their domesticated agency and morphing their behaviour, women embodied their hope for a beautiful future.

In ending this thesis, it is imperative to acknowledge, once again, its inherently incomplete nature. As such, this monograph represents a glimpse of the art of maquis, an incomplete representation of makeup and making up in Ouagadougou. In acknowledging the limits of this thesis, it must be noted that engaging other literature on the presentation of the self in everyday life (Mattson, 2021; Cordwell and Schwarz, 1979; Davies, 2020; DeMello, 2007; De Negri, 1986) on a deeper level with would facilitate further analysis. Moreover, further research on the social life of makeup tools would productively shift this analysis from the social function of makeup to the value of the makeup technologies employed by the women in the thesis, leading to further insights on participants' capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2014). Still, the thesis teases its readers with ideas and stories from the maquis, providing an analytical lens for understanding the local, regional, and global psycho-social and psycho-biological manifestations of beauty in Ouagadougou. Due to this thesis' requirements, I solely focussed on the face, but I intend to use data collected on 'magic makeup' and hips enlargement pills to take the discussion beyond this space.

I would like to end this thesis with a photo I took at Tantie's home in Zongo. Clementine, her daughter, was making a doll with her friend using nails and orange plastic tubes. Using what they could find, they created Halima, the doll. I consider Halima to be the soul of this thesis as I believe it captures its essence in ways that I tried to articulate through the following reflection from my field notes:

> *"Today, I was at Tantie's home, waiting for her to finish cleaning up when I noticed her kids playing in the yard. They looked so busy, I instantly got curious and started observing them. Her oldest daughter, Clementine, said to her friend, with a voice full of*

excitement: 'Okay, now it's time for the gel!'. She then dipped her index finger into a small coffee tin and applied the 'gel' on her doll's dark shiny braid. It didn't matter that the doll looked like a nail punctured orange plastic tube with glued hair extensions. The magic was in the life that she created with the tools made available to her, her capacity to dream and aspire. Even if, in my reality, the 'gel' was just coffee residues diluted in water, her doll was alive and in tune with her world. From then on, my own truth didn't matter. I had to work with what I felt, not what I saw. Halima, the doll, needed to look beautiful. She needed to put on the uniform that a simulation of hair makeup would help negotiate an extension of her Being. Perhaps one day, play dolls simulations will become simulacra. Perhaps one day, Halima, the doll, will have an Afro so big, no styling gel would be strong enough to tame it. Until then, she is the symbol par excellence of the art of maquis" (Fieldnotes, 21st January 2021, Ouagadougou).

Figure 6. Halima the doll.

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