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**DISSERTATION TOPIC**

*Masks and the question of identity: An examination of multiple identities in Smith's Ginette (1980) ,Charter's Crossing the Boundary Fence(1988), Partridge's to Breathe and Wait(1986).*

**By**

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**Dedication**

I dedicate my success to my parents, Mr and Mrs Bususu. My emotional, spiritual and financial pillars. Thank you for the undying support and love that gives me the will and power to achieve beyond limits. Thank you for teaching how to turn ideas into phenomenon.

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## **Abstract**

This research examines the representation of multiple identities in literary texts through an analysis of *Crossing the Boundary Fence* by Patricia Charter (1988), *To Breathe and Wait* by Nancy Partridge (1986) and *Ginette* by Sylvia S Bond (1980). Multiple identities manifest themselves in everyday life as we know it. The question of how identity changes, at what point and with what effect, have long been overlooked. In prose writing, the author is oftentimes unaware of the voice or voices given to their characters through language use. These voices act as masks worn during a particular conversation with which a literary character is able to reflect and refract a particular identity. The identities transcend, antagonise and work together to produce a desired, conversational outcome and this can be referred to as the desired mask. Texts written during the liberation struggle are ideal in producing evidence of these masks across age, culture, race and ethnic groups. The texts help bring out a lot of conflicting situations and the language that is evident of multiplicity in human identity.

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## **Chapter I introduction to Research**

### **1.1 Background of Study**

In past years, culture has been recognised as playing an important role in the creation of identity. In this regard, language is seen as a carrier of culture (Ngugi1986)and therefore crucial in the creation of identities. Culture – upon having many attributes withlanguage being the key tool in these attributes – aids in the creation of a single human being having multiple identities. Language patterns change and vary distinctly owing to several factors such as gender, ethnicity, age and social class. This results in the construction of multiple identities

Lakoff (1992:25) is of the idea that within the conceptual systems and our language,an unconscious, automatically-called-up metaphorical conception of a locus of conscious will and judgement is separable from the body. He gives an example of a statement by Jim Mc Cawley which states “I dreamt that I was Brigitte Bradot and that I kissed ME”. It is generally believed that there is a dual person. The ‘person’ is considered split somehow in order to be able to perform some action on the self. Lakoff goes on to state that ‘I’ can refer to a speaker,his centre of consciousness,will and judgement and then to the rest of the speaker. This conception can therefore be used to justify the idea of multiple identities. It also brings to light the possibility of language in conversation being responsible for a person having more than one form of identification. This research reiterates that more than two selves exist in every individual and literary texts enable us to understand this phenomenon.

In the physical world, van Kokswijk (2003) notes, there is a general reference to the body as a unit as the base of one’s identity. The human body provides one with an embodied identity

and this body can be identified in response to the context, genre and environment in which it will exist at some point in time. As Anrig *et al* (2004) postulate, the word ‘person’ etymologically speaking comes from *personae* which means mask. In a way, this affords a new way of looking at identities and their representations in cultural texts such as literature. Characters can thus be viewed as virtual persons who assume several identities all at once. One subject can have many masks: one at work, another at home, with friends and also with neighbours. In other words, one character’s identity is in response or in constant dialogue with his/her environment or context. One mask can also be worn by many subjects, that is to say one character can fit into another when given adequate resources.

A virtual person is a mask defined by its attribute(s), and/or its roles, and/or its ability and/or its acquisition. The person behind the mask therefore is not a coherent person – a non-existent person, or what we may postulate as a null identity. These null identities have in the past been sources of deception and honesty. They are deceptive in that one can put on a mask in order to convince as exemplified by politicians through their use of persuasive language. In certain cases the mask has been used to protect individuals from certain forms of prejudice. For example Mary Anne Evans had to use the pen name George Elliot in order to write during the Victorian era without facing prejudice. Whoopi Goldberg in the film *The Associate* has to wear the mask of a white man in order to gain recognition in the business world. Virtual identities are largely depended on the society and context in which they are presented. There is an evident dialogue between the society and the *personae*. The world cannot exist without masks or virtual and or multiple identities. A virtual identity is an identity that is not fixed. This research shows how life is depicted in literary texts as a stage on which individuals *perform* multiple roles – enacted through language – that are acquired from their social environments. Protagonists and antagonists, storylines and plots all evolve around multiple identities. Transferring thoughts and feelings is a way in which virtual identities can



be analysed. The notion of virtual identities, though generally associated with the internet, exceeds the internet. Literary texts can demonstrate that virtual identities have always existed in other cultural domains.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The question of virtual identities in literary texts has largely been ignored due to an association of virtual identities with online identities. The concept, virtual identities, needs to be broadened so that it becomes inclusive of other identities which are not based on the internet. The research hopes to analyse, illustrate and explain how virtual identities, considered masks or multiple identities are constructed through language and how these are relevant and effective in literary works.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

This researched seeks to:

- Demonstrate how language manifests the concept of multiple identities in literary texts.
- Examine the selves that are encountered by younger people at home and in the community in a racial sensitive environment.
- Explore the confluence of gendered, racial, maternal and incapacitated selves within the individual in Zimbabwean war narratives
- Explore the different ways in which multiplicity can affect race masculinity and femininity.
- Draw conclusions as to how language is essential in the balance and maintenance of multiple identities.

### **1.4 Significance of Study**

With the emergence of the internet, talk of virtual identities has become common and of major importance. Previous studies have focused mainly on how online conversation and character developments are the sources of masks and virtual identities. This research is thus

important in that it shifts attention from online studies to literary studies and explains that virtual identities have always existed. This research will outline how the constructions of multiple identities occur within literary discourse. This is significant in that it shows how, as Anahita (2006) puts across, for one to be accepted as a part of a community, one must mould themselves to fit their accepted constructs. The study will help enhance the reader's scope as it will help explore a social context as well as to reflect identity's nature and power as depicted in literature. In short, the research is significant in that it explores the nature of virtual identities in literary works and how they are constructed through language.

### **1.5 Review of Literature**

This literature review focuses on scholarly view on identity with a particular bias towards the notion of multiple identities, herein discusses as "masks." Among the ideas to be reviewed include the works of Schwarts (1987), Hall (1981) and Murphy (1996) whose contributions to the subject of identity cannot be overlooked. Past studies have debated the issue of identities by trying to distinguish the notions of 'oneself' and 'one's true self'. This research explores the idea of masks or multiple selves as they manifest in literature.

Quite recently the study of multiple identities has focused on online identities, referred to as virtual identities. Past studies have not recognized the existence of multiple identities and how they are manifested through language, literary discourse, in particular.

#### **1.5.1 Multiple Identities and the self**

Browne (2000:38) is of the idea that, "the concept of identity is an important one as it is only through establishing our own identities and learning about the identities of other individuals and groups that we come to know". Clearly Browne recognizes the importance of multiple identities within one human being Browne also emphasizes the importance of 'learning'

about one's various identities, but what he does not provide the reader with is 'how' one can learn about these identities. Research is therefore needed to show the relationships that subsist among an individual's multiple selves. Browne (2000:39) goes on to say that, "the identity of individuals and groups involves elements of personal choice and the 'responses' and attitudes of others". This therefore implies that upon relating to one another, most human beings choose a mask that best suits a recommended response and indeed solicits a responsive attitude to the one they will be relating to at that time.

Hofstadter (1987), quoted in (Schwartz 1987: 21) poses the questions: "which one of the many people who I am, the many inner voices inside of me, will dominate, who, or how will I be? Which part of me decides"? Here there seems to be an internal debate as to which mask is to be worn at what time and at what point. For Hofstadter (1987) the brain is a community comprising smaller communities which he terms 'sub-selves' or 'inner-voices'. The term 'voices' thus implies the importance of language in this process. Humans being born with the inert ability to acquire language thus can be said to have an inbuilt ability to decide which identity takes over at a given time. Research will therefore need to identify how language choice suggests particular masks at particular places and times.

Ornstein (1986) in Schwartz (1987) gives an opinion on how instead of a single intellectual entity, the mind is diverse and complex. He further states how the mind contains changeable conglomerations of different kinds of small minds which are used temporarily, wheeled into consciousness and then returned back into their place in the mind. This suggests that the change in identities occurs without the individual being conscious of the dynamics and reality of those changes.

Murphy (1996) highlights the multiple ways language is used to create the virtual identity and the multiple selves. This is closely related to Stuart Hall's concept of language being a

representational system which in a way constructs identity (1981). This implies that we speak in ways that suggest identity. In this case, when one uses a language, he or she assumes a mask which is by no means permanent. The next time one opens his/her mouth they would be assuming a different identity. This implies that language plays a role in the creation of virtual and multiple identities.

### **1.5.2 Multiple identities in psychology**

Haraway (1991) in Turkle (1996) equates a split and contradictory self with a knowing self, suggesting that every human being harbours multiple personalities and that participants learn to identify and interview their inner characters, a process that helps people with their intuition and gain a broader understanding of their relationship. Hacking (1995), in the same article by Turkle(1996), opines that in today's cases, multiple personalities are much more frequent and typically involve up to 16 alters of different ages, races and gender. Most people are aware of one personality, but with practice one learns to talk to other hidden selves. Evidently, Hacking's approach is psychological. Notwithstanding, this has its merits but there is need to consider the ways in which the same concept is understood from a literary perspective.

According to Andrews (1998) Hal and Sidra Stone have studied multiple selves for more than twenty years. The couple is also responsible for an interactive process called Voice Dialogue. According to the couple, "participants learn to identify and "interview" their inner characters—a process," (Andrews (1998:2). This process helps people access their intuition and gain a broader understanding of their relationship. They further state that most of us may be aware of only one personality—the one that behaves rationally and responsibly and faces the world each day. Yet with practice, they say, we can learn to uncover and talk to other 'hidden selves'". Eventually, one may discover a cast of forty or fifty sub-personalities within, although the majority of us begin with a repertoire of perhaps five or six. The Stones

seem to suggest that the dialogue that conceives multiple identities happens within one's mind and or consciousness. They go further to assert that multiple identities are the cause of multiple personality disorders (MPD). Bahktin (1981) however counters this by claiming that multiple personalities are as involuntary as language patterns and thus cannot be described as a cause for any personality disorders.

Sidra Stone opines that “psychotics have a full amnesiac barrier between the different selves, and none of them connect. Healthy individuals have a strong ego that allows them to communicate with all these personalities and come away with new experiences and new insights” (Andrews 1998:3). Here the idea being put forward is that forgetting oneself leads to mental illness and that when one is healthy they have the ability to connect their multiple selves hence suggesting that there is common ground or a nucleus to identity. This past research has ignored the concept of one's dialogue with other human beings and how these help conceive and shape multiple identities. Implicit in these views is that multiple selves equates to mental instability or disorder. It appears the psychological stance on multiple identities seek a balance among the various selves in an individual so that one may be considered sane. A dialogic approach will nevertheless reveal that multiplicity of selves is an essential condition of all individuals and it might even lead to a richer and fuller individual experience.

### **1.5.3 Culture, postmodernism and multiple identities**

Reis (1995) propose that the self is a socially constructed entity which can be conceptualized from a variety of perspectives. Technology and pluralism brought metaphors of multiple selves. This is a postmodern definition of how multiple selves are identified. Postmodern theorists assert that some cultures accommodate multiple selves better than others. Gergen

(1992) in Hoffman et al (2005) looks at the creation, identification and acceptance of multiple identities by technology and pluralism. From the above assertion it is plain to see how multiple identities are to be accepted in postmodernism owing to pluralism and technology. The part dialogue plays in the creation of multiple identities is not recognized in this understanding. More emphasis is placed on the importance of technology and pluralism instead. While this is true, it does not give the complete picture.

Murphy (1996) in Hoffman *et al* (2005) highlights the multiple ways language is used in modern and postmodern paradigms. Modern paradigms assume that language is generally describing something real having an absolute meaning. In this paradigm, it makes sense to debate the definitions of words. A postmodern linguistic theory views language as expressive, or related to internal perceptions and feelings. Additionally, postmodernism assumes language is socially constructive, and therefore not used in a consistent manner over time or across people. While the notion of language is indeed recognized as important in the construction of identities, the part dialogue plays needs attention. Postmodern views on language definitely valuable to the research but new emphasis on dialogue in literary texts will help expand our understanding of multiple identities and cast the debate wider, towards other fields of inquiry such as literature. .

#### **1.5.4 Technology and virtual/online identities**

Identity plays a key role in virtual communities. A virtual community is an abstract community that is created. In other words a virtual community is a masked community. Technology has given rise to virtual identities and/or online identities whereby one is able to create various identities. Donath (1998) states that communication is a major tool in virtual communities and thus identity in the virtual world is highly ambiguous. For example, people participate in Facebook groups or assume a particular twitter name. These online groups are

used to seek information or companionship, advocate an operating system or a religion. My research will thus illustrate how the same is true for non-virtual identities as through language people put on masks to seek information or companionship, advocate an operating system or a religion.

Online personae can be likened to masks whereby when one goes offline they seem to have removed the mask and put on another in the ‘real’ world. Hongladarom (2011:534) states that “the online self-functions as a persona, a front used by the underlying person, and there is a degree of freedom within which the person can create her persona the way she likes.” The creation of deliberate masks cannot be denied. Nevertheless masks are inevitable as long as dialogue is taking place language.

These are just some of the many debates on the notion of multiple identities. Most researches have focused on the psychological aspects of how multiple identities are created. Some researchers have focused on how technology has produced multiple identities and yet language is equally responsible for creating them as well. Much research has switched to digital studies and thus people have turned a blind ear as to how multiple identities are depicted in literature.

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This research finds theoretical grounding in Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue (1981). Bakhtin understands existence – be it literary, social, political etc. – as dialogic, meaning that dialogue permeates all forms of existence. He explains that language, through which dialogue occurs, is not a system of abstract grammatical categories but rather ‘conceived’ as ideologically saturated. In this conception language is a world view insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. This language is always multiple owing to push-pull forces – what Bakhtin calls “centripetal” and “centrifugal” forces – which govern

all uses of language. Language is inflected by several conflicting variables such as generation, profession, class and ideological inclination, among others. The use of language, it therefore follows, suggests multiple sites of speaking, what we refer to in this research as masks or multiple selves. Bahktin explains (290), "...each generation at each social level has its own language; moreover, every age group has as a matter of fact its own language, its own vocabulary, its own particular accentual system that, in their turn, vary depending on social level, academic institution (the language of the cadet, the high school student, the trade school student are all different languages) and other stratifying factors..." These shifts of perspective from one mask to another are not always conscious. Indeed Freud notes that "it is not possible for the self to reflect and know completely its own identity since it is formed not only in the line of practice of other structures and discourses, but also in a complex relationship with unconscious life" (Hall 1980:20). This means that in as much as identities change regularly in condition of discourse, they are also subject to change with the bearer unaware of the changes. This involuntary display of character represents the inevitable masks that change rapidly through conversations with the self and with others.

Identity can never be conceptualized, it is therefore a process that happens over time and is not stable. The centre in identity is non-existent (null) and does not hold, hence identity is highly fluid and can change through language use (Hall 1980).

Dialogism enables us to identify multiple selves through the speeches of individuals in relation to their social context or discourse. There is no identity that is without the dialogic relationship to the other. Identity therefore changes due to dialogue between the self and the significant other. The fact therefore that identity is in constant dialogue makes it close to impossible for it to have a centre or nucleus. Dialogism thus supports the notion of identity being multiple.



This research applies the concept of dialogism by dwelling on the several dialogues in literary texts and how these serve as points where masks emerge, find expression and/elimination in the process to the extent that a “null” identity can be postulated. As characters interact, specific selves come into contact. These masks are by no means uniform or fixed but are always implicated in the internal contradictions which, according to Bakhtin, characterize all existence.

### **1.7 Research Design and Methods**

The variables in this research are the multiple identities and literature, therefore the research is based on textual analysis. The researcher will conduct research through a thorough analysis of texts such as *Crossing the Boundary Fence* by Patricia Charter Ginnete Sylvia Bond Smith and *To Breathe and wait* by Nancy Partridge, which are related in that they all describe a similar geographical and historic event which is the war in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and thus make it more appropriate to show the existence of multiple identities. The researcher will examine each of the texts individually as per chapter. The research will be focused mainly on how characters manifest multiple identities.

## **Chapter 2: The masks of reconciliation/multiculturalism in Charter's *Crossing the Boundary Fence***

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, there was significant discussion on the relevance of multiple identities in our day to day lives. Literature to justify the notion of masks was reviewed and it is now important to demonstrate the way in which these masks operate. The book *Crossing the Boundary Fence* (1988) by Patricia Charter will provide the basis for discussion. In this chapter there will be an analysis of the black character Musa and her white friend Diana, as well as their relations with family, during the later stages of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. There will be an in depth analysis of their conversations with family and the community.

*Crossing the Boundary Fence* is a book set in 1978 Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia. Its plot revolves around a black farmer's daughter Musa and Diana the daughter of a white farmer. The title is derived from the boundary fence which divides their two farms and metaphorically their cultures and ways of life. With the war at hand, their friendship is forbidden, and it takes several conversations for them to be able to bridge the cultural boundary between them. This chapter will therefore explore the various conversations that occur between Diana and Musa and how these reflect several identities that characterize them.

### **2.2 Masks At Home**

#### ***2.2.1 Musa and Mai Simba***

In the Shona tradition, a mother is construed as a caring figure, one that controls the domestic aspects of a home, and as such is to be treated with utmost respect and honour. In the early

stages of the text we are immediately introduced to a strained mother and daughter relationship. Musa makes reference to Mai Simba as being her stepmother hence the usual mother and daughter bond does not exist. In the link “Stepfamilies Australia” Paul Newman (2000) claims that a traditional mother role does not usually work well for a step mother. The stepmother often has the unenviable job of being a mother figure and yet not a mother to her stepchildren. This thus shows how the stepmother role does not come naturally but is rather a mode one has to switch into.

Masks therefore are worn by Musa as she is supposed to treat Mai Simba with respect and honour as she represents a maternal figure and she also has to perform the role of being a young black woman who is reputable and obedient as the following conversation shows: “Musa! Musa! Musa! Come here! What are you doing?”/ “I’m coming, Mai” (7). From this we can already see the sort of relationship that seemingly exists between Musa and the Other. The author uses punctuation marks for the speech by Mai to show the mask of authority and superiority. This again gives Musa the subordinate position as highlighted by omission of the exclamation marks. Because we know that Musa is not close to Mai Simba, we can only conclude that her response and behavior towards the older woman is a performance and therefore a feat which is depended on a particular mask of the African traditional obedient and loyal daughter. As their conversation progresses we are introduced to more masks that are conflicting and yet co-exist amicably in bringing out a peaceful conversation:

“It’s high time you went to the well,” her *stepmother* was saying.

“Why are you so lazy? And take Maria with you.”

...”why doesn’t she just ask me to go?”(7)

Charter (1988) at this point introduces the relationship that exists between the two and how they relate to each other. From the above quotation we are introduced to Musa's two masks that are conflicting. The first mask is spiteful and rebellious because she claims Mai Simba is always scolding her and she wishes she would be given an instruction without bitterness. The second one is a responsible mask which is forced on her by tradition. As a young Zimbabwean girl belonging to the African culture of pre-colonial era, it is a duty and obligation for her to fetch water and look after the young. Her action therefore will depend on the mask that overpowers the other. Evidently societal expectations lead to one mask being overshadowed by another. The mask of rebellion is overshadowed and remains a fantasy while that of responsibility and duty is assumed as Musa unwillingly becomes obedient to her stepmother.

We are further introduced to more masks as we analyze the conversation between Musa and Mai Simba. The family is working on the lands and we see Musa taking care of the baby and volunteering to go to the well. She tells her step-mother "I'm going to the well now Mai, and I'm taking Nyasha," (29).

In this instance Musa conflates two masks that work to her advantage. As a friend, Musa had hoped by going to the well she would meet Diana since it was now the school holidays. She then decides to use the mask of a responsible African woman by going to the well without being asked and as a bonus volunteering to take the baby with her. Mai in such a situation is silenced as she feels respected and helped. Musa is able to converge three identities, that of being a friend, the one of being a daughter and that of being an African woman in a patriarchal society. She is also forced to hide the mask of friendship towards a white girl as the war between the colonialists is reaching its peak and racial antagonism being of major highlight. It is important for Musa to be very discreet about her friendship with Diana who is a symbol of the oppressor.

As the text progresses we are enlightened on the relationship between Mai Simba and Musa as being less strained thus their conversations seem to embody multiple identities. Musa being a *chimbwido* has to answer to the calls of the liberation fighters by helping them with food and water. Mai Simba is faced with national duties and this concept of nationalism bonds the two women. The mask of nationalism overshadows that of being step mother and daughter. Besides having the relationship of step mother and step daughter they share a collective identity of being Zimbabwean and this thus leads them towards a reconcilable goal. Their conversations are less harsh and thoughts are less spiteful: "We can rest now," she told Musa. "All is ready" (123).

The above speech by Mai Simba reveals two identities. One of being a caring mother, and that of being a patriot. As the maternal figure, she supervises as and when Musa should rest and as a patriot she makes sure all is well and ready for the comrades. These roles suggest masks because in earlier chapters we have noticed the strained relationship between Mai Simba and Musa. It is only because of the war that the two seem to squabble less.

Charter (1988) highlights the importance of working together rather than against each other. This analysis can only be done through analyzing the differences in speech patterns between Mai Simba and Musa before the war was at its peak, during the war and after. When Musa discovers that Mai Simba had been killed, she experiences a couple of mixed emotions. There is one that makes her humane. This is the mask that covers Mai Simba with a jacket. There is another emotion of relief described as, "feeling overwhelmed by shock and exhaustion..." (126). Musa is not necessarily sad that Mai Simba has died but rather feels shocked that there was someone cruel enough to murder a fellow human being, let alone a fellow Zimbabwean: "Musa knew he, (her father) had a guilty feeling that he hadn't stayed with Mai, but she was glad" (128).

From the analysis, one can understand the ability of a single human being to encompass multiple identities which come in the form of masks enabled through speech. Gergen (1992) explains that multiple identities are important and relevant to psychological well-being. Language does not possess an absolute meaning. Instead, it is more important to understand the local meanings of words and how they are used differently by individuals. When one understands these various word meanings, various identities emerge thereby contributing to the notion of masks or multiple identities.

## **2.3 Masks in the Community**

### ***2.3.1 Musa and Diana***

Musa and Diana are central to the plot in *Crossing the Boundary Fence*. The relationship between the two Zimbabwean girls brings out the major themes of the text. The two's first meeting is highly coincidental as they meet at the fringes of both their social upbringing metaphorically and the fringes of their farms bordered by the 'boundary fence'. When Musa first sees the white girl, she has mixed feelings and one of them is acted out by Maria who 'ran' from the white girl Diana who immediately asks Diana: "Can you give me a drink?" (9)

From the look of things, it appears Diana feels she does not need to ask for a drink of water politely. From her question we can deduce that Diana looks at Musa's dark skin and immediately feels that she is meant to serve or cater to her thirst. Explaining the master-servant relations that subsist in *Crossing the Boundary Fence*, Tagwirei (2013:27) notes that, "blacks were made servants due to economic disparities." Musa is reduced to a slave and Diana to a master. Race and economy are significant and Diana having an upper hand in both creates a situation where one is lesser than the other. The omission of the word 'please' signifies the masks taken by both Diana and Musa. The author seems to have omitted this aspect throughout the book and thus the aspect of slave and master is almost ignored. Another

mask that is seen is that of Diana as a friend or fellow human being who has found a water source and an age mate who is able to help her. The well is on the other side of the boundary fence and therefore it would only be convenient if Musa passes the water to Diana who is on the other side of the fence. As the conversation progresses so does the development of these masks. Diana seems to be the one initiating and controlling conversation: “What are your names?” Diana asked. “I’m Diana. Diana Heron“... how old are you? ...What form are you...Do you come here often...? Where is your school?” (14)

Musa feels obliged to answer these questions probably because of race. Musa is also limited to just answering and not asking as there is a racial divide between them. From their initial conversation, there are definitely masks experienced. Musa’s speech is guided by the following masks associated with her identities: her racial identity, her friendship, her intellectual inferiority and her patriotism. When she talks about her brother and his friend who want to join the liberation war, she takes a cautious approach, allowing one mask to guide another in safeguarding the *Chimurenga* secrets as well as protecting her image as a black girl by not telling Diana that her brother is torn between going to university and joining the liberation war.

From that conversation it is visible that there are masks at play as Musa would very much want to treat Diana as a friend but because of her race and the political situation, Diana is a symbol of their misfortune and oppression and therefore it is important to co-ordinate the multiple masks so as to keep a peaceful conversation.

Their relationship continues even after both girls go to boarding school. Their speech can be analyzed through letters. Diana refers to the freedom fighters as *terrorists*, a word which implies that these people cause terror or fear. Her problems reflect two masks, that of disappointment and that of fear. Her disappointment results from an inability to spend time

with her 'black friends' and, fear that if she is seen beyond her boundary she will get killed. From Musa's reply, there are still traces of subordination and inferiority. Musa seems to be on the receiving end of the friendship as she thanks Diana for the pen and pencil set and asks for an old dictionary. From this letter we are able to evaluate the two girls' masks. Musa is indeed a friend but because of the social structure in the colonial Zimbabwe she is forced to beg which gives Diana inevitable superiority.

Musa only realizes the mask of inferiority in Diana's letter when she invites her to meet at the end furthest to the house out of sight: "You could come over to see Spiwe and stay inside the security fence and I could be on the outside of the fence. It would be best if we met at the end furthest from the house so that we are not seen. (53)"

Musa feels humiliated and imprisoned. Here the mask of friendship is overpowered by that of national consciousness. She feels insulted and thus decides to rid herself of the friendship mask for a while.

After independence we see some masks disappearing. When Musa and Spiwe go to the Heron's house they use the front door which they did not use before. Diana expresses joy in seeing her friends and for once takes a less superior role when she speaks. She asks Spiwe for reassurance in her words and this shows a certain level of equality: "This is such an important day and I want to say *Makorokoto*." She turned to Spiwe, "Is that right Spiwe?" (131).

Diana has allowed herself to be at par with her black friends and the masks of inferiority and superiority seem to have been destroyed. This is also evidenced by the swap in who asks the questions as Musa begins to feel more of a friend to Diana than before. Musa at this point is able to put on two masks, that is, one of being an older sister taking care of the children and that of being a responsible young adult in the Shona society. When Anna, the Herons' maid



asks: “How are you getting on, Musa?” (12) We get the sense that Musa has responsibilities that she is taking care of, precisely those of filling her step mother’s shoes as care-giver following the death of Mai Simba. Her response shows that she has transcended teenage hood to become a responsible adult and woman. She tells Anna: “Yes, there is a lot to do, but Maria is helping me. I can leave her with the children sometimes.”(132).

In the early chapters we are exposed to the responsibilities of a maternal figure in the Shona society. Since the death of her stepmother, Musa has been made to fit in those shoes and therefore this mask comes out whenever she talks about her obligated duties to her family and community.

#### ***2.4.2: Musa vs. Shadrach***

In early chapters we are introduced to Shadrach as being Musa’s brother’s friend. Musa describes Shadrach together with her brother David and at that point she would have assumed the mask of a sister. She however continues to describe them in a masculine way and this reveals another mask that will be at play: “...he was tall and strong, and he and Shadrach were in the school soccer team” (8).

Musa evidently feels protected by the two and as a woman she is proud to have two strong and reputable men to look after her. However this admiration seems to be more than admiration for a random person or brother. This is revealed when the boys break away from school to join the liberation struggle. Musa is concerned but is also proud to know that Shadrach was helping to liberate the country. Being a woman raised in a patriarchal society, it is evident to see the dependence of Musa upon her brother and friend. She feels almost certain that her strong courageous brothers will fight for the country’s liberation and she assumes the lesser role of feeding the comrades. In her mind, the boys are meant to fight and she is meant to cook. Shadrach and Musa’s relationship is later rekindled when they meet at

the hospital as patients and war victims. In one of their conversations Shadrach says “It’s a hard life in the camps Musa, but the spirit is very good and the morale is high” (115).

The speech shows how the two are wearing masks that resemble patriotism and hope for a new Zimbabwe. They unknowingly switch to different masks which puts them against one another as siblings Shadrach asks “What about the rest of the family. What are they like” (116)?

This suggests a brother and sister talking to each other and it shows concern over what has become of the family during the war. The masks shift until they reach a more comfortable one or one that would make it more comfortable to discuss an intended issue. In this case we see how the conversations switch from a serious talk about the war. There is a mask of a comrade and a chimbwido in interaction, the conversation switches to talk about family and the masks of brother and sister are revealed and then the conversation eventually becomes that of two adults in love or rather Musa becomes the one being wooed by Shadrach. He reveals “Musa, I shall never look at another girl but you. One day I want you to be my wife....” (116). Musa responds “Shad, I do love you...and of course I’ll wait for you...always” (117).

Here Shadrach speaks like a man in love who hopes to one day marry the woman he loves. Musa speaks like a woman in love and also has hopes to get married as society expects her to. Clearly there have been multiple shifts in identity for both Shadrach and Musa. They switch into several masks and they are not even aware of it.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how multiple identities are produced through the speeches of characters. It is clear to see how one individual has the ability to take on several masks at one time without confusion or collision. So at one hand, the same time people feel part of their village, they have several identities at home in the community and all other social places. Language is therefore a weapon that helps construct identity and the more diverse language is the more diverse identities become as well. Hall (1981) claims that there is no identity that is without a dialogic relation to the other. This chapter has explored the manifestation of multiple identities in younger people.

The next chapter will explore the confluence of gendered, racial, maternal and incapacitated selves within the individual in a Zimbabwean war narrative. It will explore the narrative *To Breathe and Wait* by Nancy Partridge. In this chapter I will discuss how multiple identities manifest themselves in a white woman during the liberation war in Zimbabwe.

## **Chapter 3: The confluence of gender, race and illness in Partridge's *To Breathe and Wait***

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the experiences of two teenage girls, one black and the other white during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and how they manifest multiple identities. This chapter will explore the experiences of an elderly white woman during the liberation struggle. It will analyze the different masks which emerge as she battles with womanhood, motherhood, cancer and war.

*To Breathe and Wait*, a novel set in Bulawayo during the 1970s, is about a white woman, Deidre Messiter, who is diagnosed with cancer, and her relationship with friends, workers and children during the liberation war of Zimbabwe. We realize from reading *To Breathe and Wait* that the political events that were present during the seventies in Rhodesia were outwardly shaping women's lives by depriving them of meaningful contacts with friends; shaping the lives of the young while complicating the relations mothers had with their children and leaving individuals in several kinds of solitude some of which left them battling with personal problems on their own. In *To Breathe and Wait*, war and illness are entangled to the point where individuals, such as Deidre, are forced to adopt one mask after another and at times simultaneously. In circumstances such as these individuals inevitably experience multiple lives or negotiate several masks as part of their efforts to create a semblance of order in their lives. This chapter focuses on the various conversations Deidre has with her multiple selves and the resultant mask/s that arise from these conversations as she negotiates the turbulent environment, characterized by illness and war, in which she lives.

### **3.2 The Cancer in me: Deidre as a cancer patient.**

The reader's initial encounter with Deidre is of a woman in a confused state of mind resulting from her deteriorating health. She finds herself constantly drifting from one random thought to another within a short space of time. This, as it turns out, is one of the symptoms of cancer in a human being (The American Cancer Society 2012). This society claims that some people believe they are being punished for something they failed to do in the past: "People need some time to adjust to the fact that they have cancer. They need time to think about what is most important in their lives and get support from loved ones" (2012:2).

Deidre seems to battle with the vulnerable mask of being a patient and how to react to it. She battles with her cancerous self on whether to get emotional support from her children or to keep it to herself until she gets the hang of it.: "My daughter will be home for dinner. But I am not going to be ill am I? I'd rather be alone. There is so much to do. No, not to do, to think out..." (10). This clearly shows how she struggles between the patient and the responsible mother. She continues having loud conversations with her other selves and these negotiate until they reach a favourable decision: "I don't want anyone to know. Not yet" (10).

This mask is suitable for Deidre in order for her to adjust to the news of her illness. She needs to come to terms with the idea that she is not well and her assumed healthy self battles with the ill self in trying to persuade Deidre to accept her state of health. She seems to be preparing herself for death and yet she still feels the urge to live. There is also confusion in this sense of life and death. Her fragile self, who increasingly associates with nature, battles with her vulnerable self. In these circumstances she chooses connection with nature which gives her the feeling that life is great and continues after death. This optimistic self gives her the feeling that greater things are to come, yet her vulnerable self is constantly reminding her that she is weak and at the verge of death.

Like most white women living in colonial Zimbabwe, she spends most of her time gardening and taking care of flowers. It has been very hot of late and the exhaustion that the sun brings her is similar to that of the cancer illness. The anticipated rain can be likened to anticipation of the life that is to follow after death: “Hard to believe in a dark future when the jasmine leaned scented, in that window. The young leaves glinted, fresh from the respite brought by the night... speaking in hushed murmurs of the rain coming soon, soon, soon” (29).

The fragile mask depends on nature and gives her an optimistic feeling of the future and yet her weak and vulnerable self gives a pessimistic view of the future's outlook. Nature plays a double role which in turn brings out multiple selves in Deidre. Her dialogue with nature results in different simultaneous feelings. Her emotional connection to nature reveals a self that is optimistic and ready to accept the medical condition and another self who reminds her of how weak the cancer has made her and paints an oblique picture of the present and future. The fatigue she feels can only be soothed by the cool rains. Here, death is not viewed or taken up as a bad or sad thing but rather something refreshing. Deidre seems to have accepted the inevitability of death and therefore temporarily forgets about the maternal identity that keeps her from embracing the rest that she might experience after death. Her reference to her deceased husband James in relation to the rain shows how she sees hope in being happy after death. The weak and vulnerable self can only be soothed by the self that has accepted the medical condition.

Deidre's terminal illness holds a lot of disappointment. She feels the disappointment mainly when she is speaking with her friends. This mask is usually hidden behind that of hope. She wishes to employ the sense of hope that she has more time to live and tries hard to dismiss the disappointing self. She at times hides one mask behind the other. When her neighbour

Hilary comes to visit she asks her to look after the garden: “Would you mind giving the garden a look-over if I do go”(106)?This statement is to an extent ambiguous but Hilary’s silence shows that she realized ‘go’ could mean ‘die’. Deidre decides to mask the awkwardness by adding:“I might be in Salisbury, settling Susan in by then,” but that sounded thin so she added, “or helping Eleanor with the baby” (106).

Clearly she needs to say something that can confirm that she is not dying. At this point she begins to have a conversation with her ill self, likening her death with nature. Her switch is visible as she begins to again associate life with nature and how easy it should be for her to die. She likens it to a journey to see her children as well as the manner in which leaves fall. The masks work interchangeably in bringing comfort to Deidre and in helping her seek hope in a disappointing situation.

As Deidre’s battle with cancer continues, the religious self battles constantly with the mortal self. She refuses to acknowledge the existence of a God and that there is a heaven that provides happiness for her. She feels the best state she can ever be in is being alive and her spiritual being therefore is overshadowed by her will to live. She mentions the existence of more than one theory in relation to life and that life cannot be sustained using a single explanation. This is the same as saying that a person cannot exist as a single being but rather inhabits multiple selves and these are more practical in explaining the notion of life and existence.

Deidre feels there is no other life that can exceed the one she is already living and this denotes the general Christian ideology of life after death. She feels the human being is mortal and therefore feels the urge to live rather than die. Her weakness, fear and confused self are

in a debate with the mortality of men in relation to religion. Her dialogue with religion, mortality and life bring out selves that cannot agree on whether it is best to live or die. The self that denies religion and mortality disagree completely as she feels they limit the theories connected with life and that if religion should save her she should hence become immortal and live to longer than expected. The self that is hopeful towards life therefore plays a domineering role over that which is religious. Multiple identities are natured in Deidre in such a way that they link, oppose and most times over-shadow each other. The other masks like the religious mask are suppressed and thus cannot be fully established for it cannot relate to her current situation. There is no direct dialogue between Deidre's conditions and the religious realm.

### **3.3 Motherhoods: Deidre as a mother**

When her children eventually find out about her illness there is panic which she had wished to avoid in earlier chapters. This ability for her to let her children in on the state of her illness can be said to have been brought about by the need for support. Motherhood is a social role which inhabits different roles and tasks. The mask of being protective and not wanting to tell her children about her illness is evident through her earlier speeches such as when she speaks to her son Charles. Because the liberation war is at its peak, she does not want to give him the news of her illness and yet she feels weak and needs to be protected. She however acts masks her condition by telling him that she "couldn't be better" (9).

She gives an answer that protects Charles, as opposed to the truth regarding her health. Here we see two masks coinciding again. Deidre works with two masks that are not clearly conflicting. She wants to be responsible for her children's well-being and yet she has to protect them from knowing her fragile self, which she feels might change her children's



future plans. These masks are also brought out when she likens her emotional position to when she gave birth to Charles who is her first born. She describes how she was meant to feed him and yet she herself was so weak and tired.

It is a mother's responsibility to feed her child and yet she has to rest a bit if she is to protect her child from the obscure future. Deidre protects her children against the truth of her illness and yet she wants to be responsible enough to let them know how she is and allow them to plan a future without her.

Wakerley (1987:149) writes of Deidre: "At the same time, she acknowledges that her children have the right to stand alone, and that emotional independence is as unimportant as physical liberty. This thus gives her the liberty to be able to make the decision of telling her children as a way to empower them with knowledge so that they would be able to think and act independently." In this case, the mask of being a responsible overshadows the protective one. Deidre is therefore able to live as less of a protective mother and more of a responsible mother. She in fact gives Charles a protective role so that he is able to take over after she is gone or in such a weak state of being. When she tells her daughter that Charles worries about them she effectively surrenders the maternal role and gives the protective baton stick to her first born son Charles. She has chosen the mask of being the responsible mother over being the overprotective mother. She is responsible in giving her children independence and freedom to make their own decisions regarding the future.

With the war at its peak, Deidre is forced to feel empathetic as a mother again as opposed to her feeling like a superior white woman. When Julia, her black maid arrives back from her village with the terrible news of having lost her brother to the war, Deidre is able to relate and

thus her whiteness is overpowered by her maternal role. Deidre successfully suppresses her racial identity for a gendered one where her womanhood and motherhood allow her to reach to Julia. In this instance we see the unity of two maternal masks, strength and empathy working against colour and status. Deidre is convinced that “a sore for Charles aches for Lancelot. The bond binds mothers to gunner or gunned” (97).

### **3.4 Nationalism: Race, Class, Gender and Friendship**

In the novel, we are introduced to relationships across race and ethnicity. The text was written at a point whereby the black race was fighting white colonial rule. It was thus necessary for Partridge to illustrate how a bridge can be created across racial or ethnic groups. Class struggle is on-going in the text and as Geertz (1975), Mauss (1938/1985) and Shweder and Bourne (1984) in Owe *et al* (2012:13) share the idea that, “Since the beginnings of social scientific interest in cross-cultural differences, theorists and researchers have often observed that members of different cultures around the world (and indifferent historical periods) seem to have diverging beliefs or conceptions about the nature of personhood.” This implies that there are certain ways in which relationships across cultures are defined by the way in which one perceives the other. Having said this it is now important to analyze the various ways in which Deidre relates with the masks contained under her being a patriot and white woman during the liberation struggle.

#### **3.4.1 Deidre as a White Zimbabwean woman**

As Deidre’s terminal illness develops so does the war situation heighten in the country which causes more cause for concern for the future of the country and her children? Deidre confesses how she had a sense of security and love for her country. Hope is nevertheless

obscured by fear. She describes how Rhodesia was an ideal place for raising her children and very comfortable which highlights optimistic side and the anxiety which seems to accompany hope. She reminisces of this period thus: "So many years of sun, and comfort and good servants? Rhodesia was a relaxed place for children to grow in, for its problems went mostly above their heads. And Africans were so friendly to them" (26). Presently she is mostly scared for her children who she will leave behind when she passes on at the hands of cancer.

Deidre's nostalgia for times past is soon obscured by that of fear because of the on-going war. Pride is also seen in Deidre when she appreciates the nature that is associated with Rhodesia. Fear is again seen when she associates the same Rhodesian nature with death. The death presented by cancer and war are in a way entwined: "The strong scents of jasmine, honeysuckle, early roses, delicate bauhinia dropping its spiky orchid flowers on the burnt earth, ... yes it is the best thing on the whole that the future can be dark" (29). Fear and pride are seen coinciding as Deidre is uncertain of the future and yet she feels proud to be Rhodesian and yet there is that fear of death either from war or cancer:

Deidre is a white woman living in colonial Zimbabwe during the liberation war. She has a black maid Julia and the gardener Bertram who according to her friends are meant to be treated as subordinates with regards to their race and social statuses. Suffering from the terminal illness, Deidre discovers that her domestic workers provide a more sincere friendship in comparison to her friends with whom she shares her skin colour and social status. This section will therefore explore the ways in which her speech patterns suggest multiplicity in her identity. It will highlight the ways in which the identities switch from time to time depending on situation and conversation.

Wakerley (1987:149) observes

The right of every human being to freedom, both personal and political, becomes obvious to [Deidre] with the realization that Julia, her maid, and increasingly her friend, is exactly like herself in every respect and that their mutual interdependence must be based on equality of fact as well as of personal recognition.

This realization noted by Wakerley is one which engenders several conflicting masks in Deidre, associated with her place as a white woman dealing with black women suffering from the same war. Deidre feels her workers provide her more support than her own family. She concedes: “Bertram. And Julia. The real supports of her life” (22). This realisation strikes her as “a moment of vision alarming rather than comforting” (ibid). Clearly, as Deidre confronts the self that depends on her ‘black’ domestic help, she finds herself alarmed rather than comforted. This self confesses the dependency she feels towards the two and her ‘white’ self is shocked at this revelation. She seems to substitute her workers for her children.

Being a white Zimbabwean, Deidre battles with the masks of friendship as opposed to master. She feels closer to Julia as a friend rather than as her employer. Realising that her children are far she is comforted in the knowledge that she has Julia and Bertram (23). She is comfortable in Susan, her last daughter, leaving and it is interesting to note how she places her domestic help in the same category as her children. This thus confirms that she also puts on a motherly mask to the maid and gardener as opposed to the usual role where-by the white master has no emotional tie to her black servant. This self is also unleashed when Charles her son decides to fix the shower and commenting on how Bertram was the one meant to do the handy work.

Charles feels a racial and status advantage and superiority over Bertram but Deidre defends Bertram more as a human being than his white master. Following Charles’ allegations of

Bertram's incompetence and insubordination regarding the installation of a new shower, Deidre dissolves the resentment that Charles might feel towards Bertram by saying "Susan has just told me about it, Charles. I haven't asked him yet. It is a big garden you know" (22). She is even willing to acknowledge that the garden Bertram cultivates is big!

By taking the blame for the shower not being fixed, Deidre shows that she does not feel comfortable in the mask of master over servant in the way that Charles feels. Deidre asks the servants, rather than order them around, which is a polite way of doing the same thing. She has respect for her workers as human beings but this does not remove the equation that she is superior to them. There could be more reasons surrounding Julia and Bertram's submissiveness. They could be compliant just because as workers it is their duty to do so, or because they feel an emotional bond towards Deidre or they feel inferior to the white race, or for all reasons combined.

Deidre justifies her trust in Julia by stating how the 'black' servant is not trusted generally and yet in the home the white people trust the African servants with their children, homes and gardens (30). She feels Julia is a treasure to her and her treatment towards her confirms this. Deidre is able to relate to Julia as a mother during the liberation war. The two belong to different races and ethnic groups who are at war with each other and therefore one would expect an antagonistic relationship between them. They both have their sons taking part in the war and it seems to Deidre, Julia is as hopeful as any mother could be. This identity is clear when Julia loses her brother Lancelot to the war. Deidre is terribly hurt and extraordinarily empathetic towards Julia. What brings about this emotion is the ability for Deidre to identify herself as a woman regardless of race and culture. She breaks the cultural, class and racial barrier by allowing this identity to be revealed.

An internal monologue following the death of Lancelot demonstrates this:

Oh, this ache for Julia's mother: what can I do? What we have done is so limited, what can we do now? Expiation? What expiation could be there be if Charles died out there in the bush, never saw his child...I must talk to Julia, find out if anything would make any difference, anything I could do(138).

Deidre has three masks at play from this statement. One is empathizing with Julia's mother for the loss of her son, while the other is compassionate about Julia as a friend. The third mask is that of the white master who feels the urge to help her black domestic worker at grieving times. She feels at an economic advantage and hence empowered to be of great help to Julia financially.

Deidre is not moved in any way when her white friend Elsa suggests that the black domestic worker cannot be trusted. Elsa refuses to think blacks can be differentiated individuals with the ability to think and act differently. Black domestic workers are objectified and treated with resentment. Deidre however refuses to act in the way she is expected to act. When asked when Julia is coming back she chooses to answer as indifferently as possible thereby refusing to assume the mask of white supremacist bigotry: "about Monday I think" (107).

A comparison of the friendships between Deidre and Julia versus that of Deidre and Katherine can be made to illustrate the multiplicity of Deidre's identities. The first obvious one would be that Katherine is white and Julia is black.

The servant-master relationship also gives Julia a disadvantage compared to Katherine who is not a servant to Deidre in anyway. What then bonds the three are the aspects of womanhood, nationalism and friendship. Throughout the novel we see how both Julia and Katherine help Deidre in dealing with cancer and they share sorrows of the war and their fears as women during the liberation struggle. They are unable to participate in the war and all they can do is “Breath and Wait”. Deidre therefore is able to communicate with all of these identities and how the masks help her to associate with other women. Encapsulating this experience the narrator notes:

There was a whole stream of thrust flowing already, hindered by prejudice but never cut off entirely, flowing beneath the surface of irritations. Away from the blocking propaganda, flowing clear and strong at this moment between the old lady and herself, who can hardly speak to each other? Other women would learn to trust one another; beauty flowered....when Julia brought the tea she lifted her cup, shakily saluting them both, in gratitude and hope (242).

As women, they had experienced the war in similar ways even though the social, economic and cultural barriers had forced them to act accordingly.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The idea of multiple identities perpetuated through language is quite clear in this chapter. Analyzing cross-cultural relations in a terminal health situation is very effective in bringing out the masks one human being can encounter at a given time. Diverging beliefs about the extent to which individuals are separate from, or closely connected to, the social context have been portrayed as a defining feature of the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism. This thus implies that individuals are able to identify themselves with their ethnic and cultural

groups. The ability for one to identify themselves with another across a different culture is done when one overlooks the question of race, gender and class. One might argue that when a superior race or class is in need that is when they are able to fully acknowledge and appreciate the lesser more inferior race and class. Deidre's terminal illness during the liberation war gives her the power to associate, disassociate, appreciate and connect with her other selves in order to communicate and make sense of the world around her.

The following chapter looks at stereotypes associated with masculinities and how individual men embody several identities during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The research focuses on *Ginette* by Sylvia Bond Smith, paying close attention to the male characters Barry and Joseph, and how they relate to their multiple selves.



## **Chapter 4: Men, Masculinities and Masks in Smith's *Ginette***

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the masks embodied by an aging white woman suffering from cancer as depicted in the text *To Breathe and Wait* by Nancy Partridge. It explored the typical masks that are encountered by Deidre or Mrs Messiter in her life situation as a white woman suffering from cancer during the liberation struggle, and thus the chapter focused on her multiple selves and how they are influenced by context. This chapter focuses on the different masculinities that emerge in Bond's *Ginette*. It explores the different masculinities embodied in an individual with special attention on how the individual male is prone to several masks which are not always complimentary and sometimes contradictory.

Katz (1999:16) suggests that we should look at masculinity “ in a new way: not as fixed, inevitable, natural state of being, but rather as a projection, a performance, a mask that men often wear to shield vulnerability and hide humanity.” It is interesting to note Katz's reference to masculinity as “a mask”, something, if we may add, which men assume through language. Connell (1987) categorizes masculinities into six that is, multiple masculinities, hierarchy and hegemony, collective masculinities, internal complexity and dynamics. Clatterbaugh (1998) in Connell (1998) suggests that there are challenges in defining masculinities because most of them are vague, inconsistent or in other ways unsatisfactory. And he emphasizes on the idea of masculinities as a fixed identity or stable as inaccurate. It is therefore clear that masculinities are by no means fixed, but rather change from time to time. The chapter will however focus on the different masculinities in the individual male rather than the conventional approach of looking at categories of men. It is possible for this chapter to focus on the different identities brought about by masculinity and the different masks

embodied by these traits. I will henceforth use the text *Ginette* by Sylvia Bond Smith to broadly analyse the different masculine masks that emerge through the character Barry.

The text *Ginette* is about a woman Ginette and her relations during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Ginette is married to Barry a white scout or soldier who is the subject of analysis in this chapter. Barry is ideal for this study for he will provide a broader understanding of masculine identities and how they produce multiple identities.

Aronson and Steel (1995:159), in the Newsweek (2000), report on how “the existence of negative stereotypes affects those who are part of the stereotyped group.” As such, ‘man’ or the term has a lot of stereotyping that is tied to it. This general ideology will thus give man different identities at different intervals. He will act and speak differently in order to fit a particular masculine discourse.

To make this chapter more elaborate and comprehensible I will divide it into the sections comprising of the general masculine traits that are found in Barry. These traits will thus contain the several masks that will be found through analysis of situation and dialogue.

#### **4.2 Machismo and conversance in Barry**

This section will dwell mainly on one scene, a boat scene which appears to the reader through flashback. This scene reveals Barry’s attempts to impress his future wife through the assumption of a mask of machismo and its attendant masks. The cycle of socialization shows how fear, confusion, insecurity and ignorance are at the core of socialisation. One’s ability to fight fear, confusion and insecurity cements one’s machismo. The cycle by Harro (1986), in fig 1 below, helps us understand how Barry like any human being, especially men, is socialized against fear, ignorance, insecurity and in this case confusion. He wants to present himself in a way that makes him a proper man rather than a witty confused ignorant man.

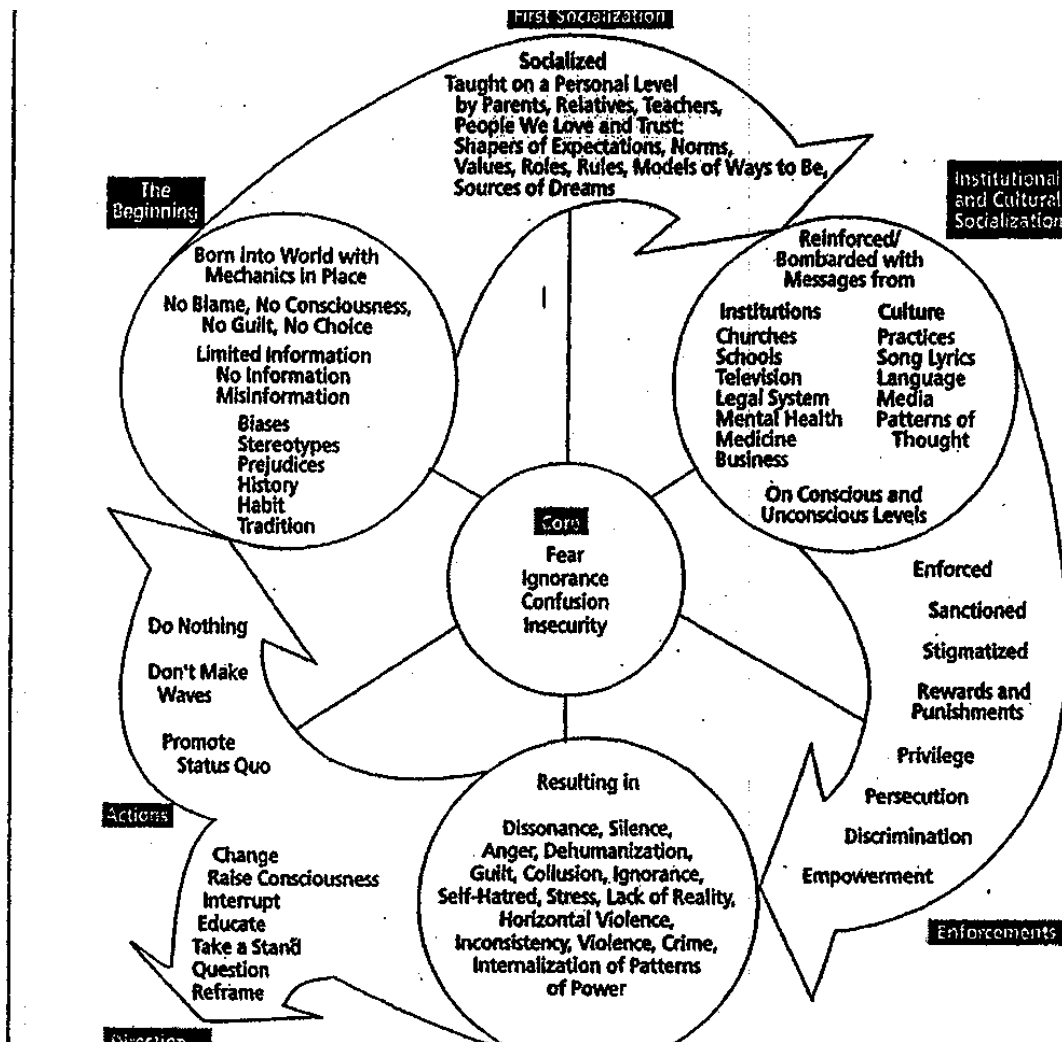


Fig 1: the cycle of socialisation adapted from Harro 1986.

It is easy for Barry to wear a mask that makes him look responsible as opposed to that which would make him seem unorganized, unreliable, ignorant and confused. In this instance, Barry is therefore using the responsible courageous mask to cover for any unorganized hitch and it is typical of men to give an excuse when they do not perform to expectation. Failure to act according to socialized expectation would result in one feeling guilty and not worthy of reward as Harro (1986) shows.

Barry and his friends usually go to a boating club as a means to hang out and pass time. Boating to Barry and his friends is a hobby but in the presence of women it becomes a

competition. Barry and his friend Jim are up against each other in a boat race thus revealing the competitiveness of men. This competitiveness is a show of machismo which Andrade (1992:34) in Anderson et al (2008) defines as “The masculine force, which to one degree or another drives all masculine behaviour.” Machismo therefore can be described as an attitude or behaviour many young males have and it is expressed through rituals, excessive interest in violent entertainment and competitive sports. Barry, because of his Machismo is forced to partake in a number of masks. It reveals his multiple sides as a man who wants to win while trying to impress a woman at the same time. For all his efforts at the boat club, Barry wins a beer mug for coming in third, something which gives him pride since he has never won anything in his life.

Part of the act Barry is involved concerns the need to impress a woman and this engenders feelings of jealousy towards other men. Men and husbands in particular are generally competitive and impressing the opposite sex or prospective wife is of great importance. This is also another characteristic of Machismo. Barry is therefore pulled in different directions. Jealous, which can also be construed as a sign of weakness, competes with the need to impress the opposite sex.

Socialization has taught boys and men to treat women in a particular way. Manners and etiquette behaviour play an important part in male grooming. According to the Binghamton University Student Affairs Division, eye contact, smiling small talk in the form of compliments and question always give a good first impression. Complimenting a woman is an expected part and parcel of the qualities of a ‘real’ man who realizes a woman’s worth. Barry uses this to try and get Ginette's attention. This continues with Barry trying to get Ginette’s attention by showing off his knowledge of boats. It is in the nature of men to brag in order to make an impression and at the same time maintain a mannered outlook.

In most societies men are expected to be conversant of many worldly things. Not knowing this general stuff will expose one as ignorant and outright dumb and this is not a very attractive attribute. Bragging however is not a very polite gesture. It contradicts the gentleman that Barry is trying to portray. Barry's politeness ultimately endures compared to his need to brag although it can be argued that this was due to Ginette's demonstration of knowledge about the world as well. She is impressed by Barry's knowledge but her knowledge humbles the bragging self, giving way to politeness.

This is thus followed by a polite offer that shifts the attention from conversance to politeness. Barry's bragging is put back into place as a man; he did not expect a woman to be as equally knowledgeable. He thus shifts to a different self. He shifts to the softer polite mask which enables him to feel his dominance over Ginette. He shifts the conversation to something more suited to this self-perception when he asks: "Can I get you another drink (9)?"

So in this scenario, we see two masks that are typical masculine traits and how they have a hierarchical structure depending on conversation. This can be likened to the manner in which hegemony and hierarchy differ from time to time depending on situation. The hegemony and hierarchy exists in a human being in the same way that it exists in the world and conversations lead to them being revealed. Multiple identities are thus evident in the masculinities and conversations in Barry.

Ginette being a strong woman is seen as a conquest for Barry, and to Barry, marrying her is an achievement. This becomes a problem in the future as Barry is not able to separate emotion from his job. Even in his love letters to Ginette, he constantly talks about his job and wants to express how much of a macho he can be as the letter he sends Ginette reveals:

My darling girl [...] It is hot here it's like living in an oven. Today we were put through ambush and close quarter battle drills again [...]two hundred kilometres

through virgin bush carrying rucksacks full of stones, weighing twenty-three kilograms, with no supplies but ammunition, salt, peanuts and water(29).

The letter goes on with Barry continuously talking about the harsh conditions of the war. There are four lines that depict the lover and husband that Barry is meant to be to Ginette.

From Barry's letter we see how his male ego supersedes the husbandry role. She gets more of how macho he is than the affectionate side to their marriage. Barry is trying to be the expected husband who is heroic and works hard to provide for his family. Like most men, he feels physical strength reflects a man's worth. He also tries to show affection, but his few words reflect just how much the soldier in him is more important than the lover. Both masks are expected of husbands but to Barry one looms larger than the other therefore stressing how he perceives them. This aspect is confirmed in later chapters when Ginette confirms how she is never sexually satisfied by Barry. Barry's manhood is therefore is biased towards his job rather than his marital duties. This thus brings us to the conclusion that Barry chooses a more prestigious mask over the noble one of satisfying his wife. He aims to satisfy his sergeant major rather than his wife Ginette.

It should be noted that although Barry masquerades as a macho man, in the face of real danger, he is unable to protect Ginette. When they are caught in a storm in earlier chapters, Barry is silent and in need of help and is later rescued by Joseph who is meant to be a lesser man because of race, culture and ethnicity. Barry constantly evokes the macho mask as a husband but when faced with a physical challenge, he wears a less dominant mask which shows how men can be weak and should not be expected to be the heroes in all instances.

### **4.3 Barry and the soldier masks**

From the onset, Barry Demblom is portrayed as a brave soldier and great patriot. His masculinity is partly shaped by the liberation war. According to Connell (1995), industrialization, world exploration and civil wars became activities associated with men and formed the basis of modern masculinities. Brannon and David (1976) contend that men should be tough, confident and self-reliable. They go on to say that men should have an aura of aggression, while being daring and violent. Being a soldier is one of the highest forms of masculinity and as Barry describes it suggests a brave and confident mask.

The aggressively physical training Barry undergoes moulds Barry into an aggressive, tough and brave character ready for battle. This mask is necessary to portray the kind of soldier expected of Barry. There is however another mask that is inevitable in human beings in a situation like these: fear. References to Barry's stomach knotting and his body stiffening during training (1) reveal that he is somewhat afraid. Fear is not expected of men. Men and boys are brought up to be fearless and brave. Carrigan et al (1987) in Donaldson (1993:3) say "male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and considerable amounts of toughness in mind and body." All the qualities listed above are described as being the norm meaning to say it is something that the males have to grow up with, more or less as part of their socialization process. In Barry's instance therefore being a soldier means having to suppress cowardice and make a show of bravery. Around colleagues and subordinates, Barry is forced to assume the mask of bravery.

Evidently, Barry's bravery is boosted by the number of troops on his side and probably more advanced machinery. Collective masculinities here come to play. According to Connell (2000:13), "Masculinities are defined and sustained in institutions, such as corporations,

armies, governments - or schools". Soldiers belonging to the military institution are expected to behave in a particular way. However, the identities have been institutionalized in Barry. They act and react in a way that is expected of Barry in his position. Fear therefore cannot belong to this institution and therefore is suppressed so that Barry can belong to the institution that he represents. Because fear is not accepted in this institution, Barry has to pretend that he is fearless in the face of his subordinates. He cannot show his fear and evidently from his speech he even becomes aggressive.

Barry seems to have turned to drinking as a form of entertainment when he is off duty. He has become so much of a drunkard and he neglects himself and his marital duties. He feels alcohol is a reward for all the hard work at war and therefore his drinking is not a problem to him but rather a well-deserved reward. According to Bosson and Vandello (2012) men turn to behaviours or habits that hide or give them an expected manly outlook. Drinking is one of these habits. Looking at Barry and other soldiers, they are tagged with different feminine tags each time they fail to measure up to expected army standard such as when the instructor yells "Move, you bloody bitch" (25) to Barry.

From this statement, one can tell that Barry is subjected to a number of insults and some degrading his status as a man. He is not allowed to express fatigue or fear although he experiences these emotions physically. He feels and expresses fear and fatigue but because of prejudice, he cannot reveal them to his instructor or to his colleagues. As mentioned above men need to maintain group solidarity and Barry being part of the troop of soldiers needs to keep his masculine traits in solitude no matter how contrasting they might be. Fear, fatigue, friendliness, bravery emotional and physical strength are kept knitted together and thus Barry makes sure he reveals a mask that does not compromise his position as a soldier.



Cooper (2011) states that the definition of strength associated with masculinity is based on dominance and control and acquired through humiliation and degradation of others. The humiliated degraded self feels the urge to retaliate and thus Barry assumes a compensatory mask through which he is able to regain his toughness and bravery. Barry is countering for the feminine insults that he received from someone who is of a higher masculinity than himself.

So, all this war drama mounting up inevitably leads to him drinking excessively. He feels after hiding his feelings for so long it would be comforting to slip into other various masculine identities. Some men feel the urge to drink more excessively as a way to demonstrate how masculine they are. There is a general misconception on how masculinity can be measured on how drunken one can get and still maintain their masculinity. Other men take refuge in getting drunk as a way to escape their harsh realities, drinking thus becomes a well deserved act that is meant to comfort and drown stress and sorrow. Men therefore drink more than women as a way to demonstrate how their day to day lives are harsh and alcohol is a break and is well deserved thus implying that women are not expected to drink as heavily as men as they do not have reason enough to do so. The differences in normative drinking patterns help reveal to what extent societies differentiate gender roles, for example, by making drinking behaviour a demonstration of masculinity (Campbell 2000; MacDonald, 1994; Roberts, 2004; Suggs, 1996 in Obot & Room 2005).

Evidently, after work, Barry wants to be a friend and a socialite rather than husband or soldier. The identity of being a good husband kicks in with the thought of Ginette and yet it is overpowered by the need to relax and be free of marital and work duties. He is however alarmed at the kind of bar which Steve takes him to. He is astonished at the notable, prominent faces he sees at the gay bar. This astonished self at the gay bar is preceded by the relieved self whereby he feels he is not the only one who is spending his off time at a gay bar.

The relieved self with time becomes comforted with alcohol and this leads to Barry discovering another part of himself that he was not aware of. He then has an encounter with Steve whereby they make love.

During this encounter we see various identities reflecting upon Barry, one that is masked by alcohol whereby he is unable to think straight, the sane person who is shocked at the events at hand and a somewhat religious self who is aware of what is right. The responsible self is thereby ignored by the urge to take a risk. These work together but are finally overpowered by the bisexual self with some influence of the alcohol engrossed self which ultimately gives him pleasure and satisfaction. Another identity at play is that of risk taking. Men are known to be risk takers and this self in Barry overpowers all the other selves. According to Obot and Room (2005:20), "...risk-taking is an important part of demonstrating masculinity..." Barry's risky self is chemically enhanced by alcohol and takes the centre stage in his actions that night but his sense of regret is not given a chance as the satisfied self is more dominant. One can argue that Barry is too much of a man that only another man can satisfy his sexual self. He needs both a man and woman for him to feel satisfied. His status of bisexual demonstrates the identities that he inhabits in as far as sexuality is concerned. The war has turned men into savages, alcoholics and other war-like qualities and in these qualities there are a number of multiplicities in their identities.

Some traces of this bisexuality were evident in Barry's earlier conversations when he compares Joseph's company to Ginette's:

I am so glad I had you with to see them instead of Joseph. He doesn't like them very much, "Barry said. Barry often took Joseph out sailing during his two hours.... They practiced racing techniques... a relationship developed between them which had more warmth to it than that of master and servant. (46)

Barry views Ginette as Joseph's replacement and, his comparing of their company unknowingly reveals traces of his queer masculinity. This bisexual self was always in Barry and it took a white man like Steve, a soldier like Steve to bring it out. We can also say that the statement was meant to compliment Ginette and thus his need to appear mannered at play. He wants to impress Ginette by acknowledging how her company was more appreciated than Joseph's.

Barry's life is eventually ended through war by Joseph, a black man who once worked at the boating club where he hung out. The last emotion that he displays is that of fear coupled with pleas to be spared of death therefore confirming that men as muscular, strong and as brave as they might seem, can be overcome by fear and desperation like any other human being. In Barry's case, his hegemonic masculinity could not save him from the tough black soldier that Joseph who was of lower masculine hierarchy at one point had become. Barry being white in Rhodesia initially had an upper hand over Joseph. The race and colour play switched roles in terms of masculinity. He is forced to a lesser position and therefore all his being white and superior traits are overcome by fear and pleading: "Joseph.... What... it's you!" the words were rasping, like sandpaper.... "Joseph you're my friend. Will you help me?" .... "Please..." (87-88.)

As he lies dying, Barry tries to draw on his earlier friendship with Joseph but as they are fighting on opposite war sides, Joseph refuses to recognize this. It is possible to see that Barry takes a more comfortable mask at first which is being a friend as this does not compromise the class that he represents. It would be easier for a white man to say 'my life was spared by a friend' rather than 'my life was spared by a black man'. Barry however recognizes that Joseph will not spare his life and thus takes on an alternative option of pleading for his life. Hegemony and hierarchy is thus evident in Barry's masks and this can be seen by the order in which he presents them. The different selves in Barry seem to be arranged in a reverse

hierarchical manner in which the lesser of the masculine self is more active than the powerful more authoritative ones. Joseph therefore, seems to be taking revenge on the white self that Barry is or can be and refuses to acknowledge the mask of being a friend and therefore, his hatred for the white race precedes his friendship with Barry. He hates Barry's physical mask and thus cannot see the friendship being imposed by Barry. It can be said thus that Barry's white mask in relation to Joseph led to his death.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

From an analysis of the text *Ginette*, we are able to see the multiple identities that can be harboured by masculinities. This chapter focused on how several masculine selves can manifest themselves in the individual male. Multiple masculinities can be found in a single human being and these contain a number of identities which are then brought out depending on the situation at hand.

The next chapter will contain concluding remarks and the outcome of this research. It will analyze if the research objectives were met and how. It will draw a universal conclusion regarding multiple identities and the idea of masks in literary work.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

After an in-depth analysis and understanding of the research, we have been led to the following conclusions: online identities are not the only means one can have multiple identities but through language, one already has more than one identity. The significant conflicts found in the identities are on the contrary co-operative identities that help in moulding a conducive mask/s enabling conversations. A mask is the ideal word for these identities for identity is by no means permanent and therefore should be referred to as a mask which can be worn and removed from time to time. Language is not just a carrier of culture but a carrier of multiple identities and it is normal and healthy for a single human being to inhabit several identities.

In the first chapter, it can be concluded that there is a general misconception regarding the notion of multiple selves. For example psychologically one is said to suffer from MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder), where-by the one person is faced with a number of identities. The research in the first chapter clearly expressed how language allows for multiplicity and aids in chronology of identities thus diverting from the psychological point of view of multiplicity being a disorder. The first chapter highlighted on the use of language in literary texts and how these produce multiple identities therefore concluded that Bahktin's theory of dialogism would be ideal in conducting this research.

The second chapter looked at the text *Crossing the Boundary Fence* by Patricia Charter. It highlighted the ways in which language indeed aids in creating multiple identities. It concluded that multiplicity in identity is natured at early stages in life through socialization. It analysed two female characters of different race living in colonial Zimbabwe and the voice that Charter gives the two young girls is seen as developing and multiplying into several voices that are strategically heard through conversation and language analysis. Naturally

societal behaviour nurtures language response hence the multiplicity or masks are seen when the girls speak according to the mask in which they are expected.

The third chapter looked at the text by Nancy Partridge, *To Breathe and Wait*, another war narrative which highlighted the complexity of language, and how it creates multiplicity in identity. From this chapter one can conclude that even when one is at conflict with the world, the multiplicity in identity follows the current at which the body encompasses the multiple identities. It concludes how the external dialogues can be a reflection of the internal dialogues with one's several selves. The interaction with the other surrounding human beings can trigger several selves and how an appropriate mask is worn to protect a vulnerable mask.

The fourth chapter analysed the multiple identities that can be found in the individual male through a reading of Smith's *Ginette*. This chapter balanced out the question of gender and multiple identities highlighting on how men have several masculinity traits and yet those traits have several identifications. This chapter concluded that men are prone to multiplicity and therefore masculinity is not fixed but through language one can witness several masculinities in a single human being.

Overall, the question of multiple identities was addressed as the research outlined the several ways in which literary works and prose writing in particular gives character not one but several voices. To the author nationality could be one of the many forms of identifying a character but through the words that the author gives the character, nationality could encompass several identities. Multiple identities are often associated with online and virtual identities whereby one creates an identity. This research however concludes that the way in which multiple identities exist in a human being is usually involuntary as they manifest themselves through language. It is only in planned speech that an intended mask is suppressed and the desired mask assumed.

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