**People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it.**

**Patches Hide No Scars By Haare Williams**

**Sad Joke On A Marae By Apirana Taylor**

**Bourne Identity Directed By Doug Liman**

**On The Sidewalk Bleeding By Evan Hunter**

Some people throughout their lives will feel like they have lost or do not know their identity. I believe identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you. It is important to believe that you belong and have a place in society. By belonging you may feel safe, wanted and loved. I have chosen the theme “People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it.” This theme is portrayed in the two poems “Patches Hide No Scars” by Haare Williams, “Sad Joke On A Marae” by Apirana Taylor, the short story “On The Sidewalk Bleeding” by Evan Hunter and also the film “The Bourne Identity” directed by Doug Liman.

In the poem “Patches Hide No Scars,” Haare Williams describes Maori men that used to be one with the land and their culture, who have now left their whanau to join gangs. They have left their culture which has lead to a loss of cultural identity. The author emphasises this by constantly repeating the word “Gone.” Their mana (prestige) is low as they have already partially lost their culture so they join gangs to feel a sense of belonging. An example of this shown in the text is; “How do we heal those slashed in the flesh when they are slashed in spirit.” The men have hidden their loss of identity behind gang jackets, patches and crime. Two good examples of this in the poem are; “They bear patches on their jackets hiding scars and wounds” and “how do we fine those lost in the streets of no direction.” This also suggests that they are living with the consequences of their lost identity, because of their decisions to try and fill it with the need to belong. The author is voicing his opinion about what happened to Maori culture all around New Zealand due to changes in society at that time. With the loss of family connections and elders to provide guidance, many young Maori found this loss of identity hard to adapt to and filled that hardness with joining a gang. I think many young Maori feel wanted when they join a gang; they have a feeling of camaraderie and that other gang members have got their back if anything happens.

“Sad Joke On A Marae” by Apirana Taylor shows a similar idea. The main character Tu has lost his cultural identity and has filled this belonging with drinking alcohol, which has impacted his life by bringing many unpleasant consequences. These consequences are emphasised with the words; “My fist is my taiaha. Jail is my home.” An example of how Tu has lost his cultural identity is he says his mihi but says it in English because he cannot speak his own language. “Then I spoke. My name is Tu the freezing worker. Ngati D.B. is my tribe. The pub is my marae.” This also portrays how Tu has filled his sense of belonging to alcohol stating that D.B. is his tribe and the pub is his marae. Although his ancestors know his wrongdoing they understand that it is never too late to regain his cultural identity. It was almost an unexpected twist at the end of the poem that the author implied that Tu’s ancestors understood his identity loss. A quote showing this understanding is; “Tihei Mauriora I cried. They understood. The tekoteko and the ghosts.”  Even though the two poems are written by different authors the same theme is evident - loss of cultural identity and the need to fill it. You could assume that both poems were written in the same time period as both of these poems reveal the significance of what happened to the Maori culture which has lead to the loss of cultural identity in many of their young people. During this period many Maori lost their cultural identity as they chose to ignore or never got taught their language, culture and traditions. With the government placing more importance on Maori language and cultures (introduction of Te Reo in schools and Maori land rights) the people felt that they did not have a place in the new society and therefore looked to fill this loss of identity. Young Maori men got a false sense of belonging by joining gangs when really the gangs took away who they really were. I think with the loss of their cultural identity they have felt the need to belong, therefore they have filled this need by choosing the easiest available path which may not have been the best path. They may have been feeling vulnerable and chose to join the first path where people seemed to be united, show kindness or give them a feeling like they belong. A relevant example of this theme shown in todays society was when Korotangi Paki was convicted of burglary, theft and drink driving in November 2014. Obviously he had lost his cultural identity and felt the need to fill this with crime and alcohol abuse with his friends. This was brought into the media spotlight because Korotangi was the son of Maori King Tuheitia and could one day become king himself. Crime and alcohol may have been the easiest path for Korotangi to feel a sense of belonging from rather than all the pressure of becoming the next Maori King.

Author Evan Hunter tells us about a 16 year old boy who lost his identity by joining a gang (Royals) in the short story “On The Sidewalk Bleeding”. Joining the gang brought consequences; no one would help him when he had been stabbed. They saw the gang jacket and not “Andy,” the boy inside it. By the time Andy realises he is dying he begins to regret joining the gang because it has taken his identity away from him and just stereotyped him as “A Royal”. The theme of “People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it” was shown through the character Andy when he joined the gang to fill the loss of identity in his life. “He could remember how happy he was when the Royals had taken him.There had been meaning to the title.” This quote portrays Andy’s happiness in finding a sense of belonging. However after Andy was stabbed and left on the sidewalk bleeding he realised how much the gang had taken his identity.  By being in the gang Andy was just “a gang member,” he was no longer Andy. When Andy realised that he was dying he says “I want to be Andy” which showed his realisation of this had come too late. He wanted the world to know that he was Andy not a Royal. In the alley, Andy comes across the young couple who decide not to help him. They do not help him because of the jacket he is wearing and everything that comes with it. This also happens when Andy is lying dead and Laura says, “His name is Andy”.  The policeman at the scene responds that Andy is just “a Royal”, giving the reader the impression that the policeman feels the death is justified because there is gang warfare involved. People often judge each other’s identities based on what they wear. If Andy walked around without that jacket, people would just see another man. Instead, Andy is judged instantly because of this jacket. In the end, this jacket cost him his life.“Had they stabbed him, Andy or had stabbed the jacket and the title.” This quote suggests the knife was plunged in hatred of the purple jacket not in hatred of Andy. Andy will die as a Royal not as Andy however the gang will not die at all. This text has a strong connection to “Patches Hide No Scars” as both Andy and the men joined gangs to try and feel a sense of knowing their identity. However Andy was the one to realise how meaningless a gang was and how it was robbing him of his time and life. The words in “Patches Hide No Scars” could easily fit into this short story, for example “Those lost in the streets of no direction” and “Those slashed in the flesh” as they unquestionably describe Andy. A surprising connection in this short story and the poem “Sad Joke On A Marae” was that the authors implied that both Andy and Tu had regretted what they had done. Tu regretted not knowing his culture and Andy regretted joining a gang. Their loss of identity had its consequences which led them both to regret what they had done to their lives. They did not want those consequences anymore as they could visualise what their lives would be like when they knew their identity. However the words in the poem suggest that Tu got a second chance “They understood. The tekoteko and the ghosts.” Andy did not get a second chance as he was already dying when he realised his mistake. Even though all the texts portrayed the theme “People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it.” both of the poems suggested the loss of cultural identity and the short story suggested the loss of individual identity. In a roundabout way Andys loss of identity was actually stolen identity. Andy joined the gang to fill his loss of identity but in the end it was the gang that stole his identity because he died as a gang member and not Andy. This relates to society today because when deaths of gang members are on the news the emphasis is on the “gang member” who is killed and not the “person” who is killed.

The film “The Bourne Identity” directed by Doug Liman is about Jason Bourne, an elite government agent who was found floating in the Mediterranean Sea riddled with bullet-holes and with no memory of who he is. He was pulled from the sea by a passing fishing vessel, with no knowledge of who he is, or how he came to drift alone in open water. The bullets in his back and the bank code embedded in his hip are the only bits of information to survive his identity loss. Without identity or background except for a surprising discovery that he knows how to speak several languages, has plenty of money and passports in a safety deposit box, and he knows how to kill anything that moves, he retraces his steps and goes in search to discover his identity.  The connection of the theme “People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it” was shown all through this film as Jason was trying to find the truth about who he was. He started out with very little clues but began to work out the bigger picture of who he was nearer to the end. “How could I forget about you? You're the only person I know.” This dialogue suggested how little he remembered about his past. The loss of identity frustrated Jason. Jason had to rely on his natural instincts to fill his loss of identity because he was angry that he did not know who he was. His instinct was that he must have been someone important before he lost his memory and identity. The director portrays Jason’s frustration in the scene of Jason talking to his new friend Marie “I can tell you the license plate numbers of all six cars outside. I can tell you that our waitress is left-handed and the guy sitting up at the counter weighs two hundred fifteen pounds and knows how to handle himself. I know the best place to look for a gun is the cab or the gray truck outside, and at this altitude, I can run flat out for a half mile before my hands start shaking. Now why would I know that? How can I know that and not know who I am?” Jason implies that this information is insignificant to help him remember who he is however it becomes very useful later on in the movie. He is so desperate to fill his loss of identity that he seeks information from the people he thinks are on his side. “Who am I?” “You're U.S. Government property. You're a malfunctioning $30 million weapon. You're a total goddamn catastrophe, and by God, if it kills me, you're going to tell me how this happened.” Jason is surprised by the realisation that his old colleagues will not fill his loss of identity either because they think that he is faking his identity loss. An interesting connection this film had in common with the short story “On The Sidewalk Bleeding” was how both Jason and Andy were judged by the clothes they were wearing. The film suggested that initially Marie did not want to give Jason a ride because he looked like he was trouble, just like the young couple would not help Andy when he was dying in the street once they had seen his gang jacket as they thought that this would bring them trouble. Both Jason and the characters described it the poem “Patches Hide No Scars” resorted to violent methods to find their identity. However the characters in  “Patches Hide No Scars” joined a gang compared to Jason who was using violence to survive so that he could find out the truth about his identity. This is also relative to “On The Sidewalk Bleeding” as gang violence was a factor that caused Andy to get stabbed and realise he had also lost his identity. The author of “Sad Joke On A Marae,” Apirana Taylor also suggests violence is a part of Tu trying to find his identity when she wrote “My fist is my taiaha. Jail is my home.” I find it interesting that violence is commonly used across these four texts as a way to fill the loss of their identity. This violence may have come from desperation to find out who they really are. This suggests that we believe that we are doing the right thing to find out who we are so we believe that this justifies the violence we use. The common connection was they all felt the need to fill their identity loss, in the two poems the characters lost their cultural identity, in the short story Andy lost his individual identity and in the film Jason literally lost his identity.

The characters in all of the texts felt like they had lost or did not know their identity. They were unsure of who they were, how they were viewed by the world and if they belonged to something important that made them feel safe, wanted and loved. They were seeking a place in society to belong to. Therefore the theme “People who have a loss of identity in their lives will feel the need to fill it.” was relevant to the two poems “Patches Hide No Scars” by Haare Williams, “Sad Joke On A Marae” by Apirana Taylor, the short story “On The Sidewalk Bleeding” by Evan Hunter and also the film “The Bourne Identity” directed by Doug Liman. I think that everyone deserves to know their own identity, it makes us feel important, understand ourselves better and most importantly gives us a sense of belonging. Without our identity we may feel lost or even misguided and become more vulnerable to violent or wrong paths to take.