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Discovering True Identity Throughout Different Worlds

Most people think they know who their personal identity and their purpose in life. However it is much more complicated. One's personal identity vary from what they see in themselves to what others see in them. A character or a person's personal identity can change and conform to who they want to be, instead of who they truly are. **In the novels *Atonement*, *Macbeth*, and *the Catcher in the Rye*, have drastically different plots, however they all have characters that connect to the theme personal identity in that they are forced or force themselves to change their ideals and personality, their old personalities that they left behind hinder their the path to who they want to become, and in the process of the novel they find themselves and realize their personal identity.**

In the novels *Atonement* and *Macbeth*, the main characters have to change their identity to attain a personal goal and forget the past. In *Atonement*, the main character Briony Tallis sends a family friend, Robbie, to jail for something he did not do. In this action, she ruins her relationship with her sister Cecilia, who is in love with Robbie. After time goes by, Briony realizes that what she did was wrong, she abandons college and becomes a nurse. By doing so, she leaves behind her dream of becoming a writer. She is trying to punish herself by becoming a nurse in World War II. She also wants to redeem herself so

that she, and her sister knows that she can do something right. In *Macbeth*, Macbeth is conflicted about whether to kill the King. After persuasion from his wife, Macbeth goes through with it. This is a major change in character for Macbeth. He was once a noble warrior, now he has become a backstabbing murderer. His ambition and goal to become King obstruct his old personality so that he can attain them. Both Briony and Macbeth abandon themselves to become a different person.

In *Atonement* and *Macbeth*, their old identities prevented and delayed them from becoming who they wanted to be. In *Atonement*, Briony wrote in her final story that Robbie and Cecilia had a happy ending, and that she made things right with her sister. However, Robbie and Cecilia both died in World War II, and she was never able to atone for her mistakes. Briony wrote herself as who she wanted to be and what she wanted to do. However, the thirteen year old Briony's mistake impeded her from doing the right thing. Her stubbornness as a child, and cowardice as an adult was the reason that Robbie and Cecilia could never be together. In *Macbeth*, the noble Macbeth he used to be did not want to kill someone who had complete trust and admiration for him. Macbeth used to be a hero who everyone looked up to, and this person crippled him from doing the deed. Macbeth was equivocating whether to kill Duncan or keep his reputation as a noble person. Macbeth had decided not to kill Duncan, when Lady Macbeth compelled him to change his mind. Both Macbeth and Briony let their past identity take over their new personality to change who they wanted to become.

In *Atonement* and *the Catcher in the Rye*, the characters Holden and Cecilia had to start over so that they could find themselves. In *Atonement*, after Briony sent the one she

loved to jail, Cecilia abandoned her family for taking the side of her dramatic and naive little sister. Cut off from her family, Cecilia had to start a new by abandoning college and becoming a nurse. Cecilia wanted to have a life with Robbie. In her new life, Cecilia was able to discover who she was, instead of what her parents wanted her to be. The fact that she was free to do as she pleased, helped her thrive as a nurse and receive a promotion. In *the Catcher in the Rye*, Holden was a troubled teenager who could not find the meaning of life. When he finally finds help after his episode in the city, he understands that he is not alone and he truly becomes himself. Throughout the novel, Holden presented himself as a rebellious young man who did not care. Holden only wanted to be the “catcher in the rye” who protected children from an early death. Holden built walls trying to keep his feelings about Allie inside. When he sought help from his family, he was able to let his feelings out, learning that he was going to be ok. Holden found himself by talking about his emotions. Holden and Cecilia were able to discover their pain and ambition, so that they can become better people.

In the novels *Atonement*, *Macbeth*, and the *Catcher in the Rye*, their drastically different plots all have characters that connect to the theme of personal identity in that they are forced to change their identity, their old personalities obstruct them from becoming who they want to be, and throughout novel they find themselves and realize their personal identity. The characters Briony, Cecilia, Holden, and Macbeth had troubles with their personal identity. They wanted to change and grow into new people. Some were able to succeed, and others could not escape the things that they were running from.