

**Appearances are Deceptive:
Identity Crisis in Plautus' *Menaechmi* and *Amphitruo***

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Abstract

*This paper focuses on the issue of identity presented in Plautus' *Menaechmi* and *Amphitruo*. Plautus touches upon social, political and philosophical concerns of the day while evoking humor. He manipulates similar names and appearances to confuse identities and to create a comic plot. In both plays there are moments where the characters question about themselves which would eventually lead them to an existential crisis. When dealing with this issue, Plautus uses metatheatrical aspects to connect his audience to make them a part of the experience. While discussing the matter of identity in the plays, this essay analyses on the contemporary Roman society in connection to the identity crisis.*

Keywords: *Plautus, identity crisis, Roman audience, Roman comedy, *Amphitruo*, *Menaechmi**

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