

Acting and Identity

Shakespeare once said that "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*). I've never acted professionally, but I do agree that we act our way through life. We are one kind of person with some people we know, a different kind of person with other people we know, and still a different kind of person with people we have just met. Then there are the differing dynamics of social situations. So what about personal identity? Does playing different roles throughout life serve to clarify who we really are, or does it just confuse us into a state of angst? Maybe it shows that personal identity is a convenient and comforting fiction and that we have no real center. Is our life "but a walking shadow"? Do our "struts and frets," our actions and our thoughts, truly "[signify] nothing" (*Macbeth*)?