

THE LABOR OF ACTION FOR THE OPERATION OF TRUTH: THE PHENOMENOLOGY  
AND DRAMATIC PLATONISM OF MEISNER TECHNIQUE AS REFINED AND  
EXTENDED BY WILLIAM ESPER

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with the application of philosophical thought and methods to school of actor training known as Meisner technique. The initial goal is to illuminate and improve the theory, practice, and pedagogy of Meisner technique through rigorous analysis and critique based in established scholarly thought. My second purpose is to use this same philosophical lens to examine the far broader question of mimesis, specifically the nature of the relationship between the created object and the world that inspired it. My interest in this is primarily political in nature. Simply put, if the mimetic object is sourced from the hegemonic world, how can it ultimately do anything other than continually justify that world's authority, and so how may the object ultimately do anything other than collude with power? It is my contention that theatre is uniquely, perhaps even singularly well suited to address the mimetic, in unique (or non-mimetic) ways.