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## Theater, Trauma, and the Rehearsal to Recovery

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*THEATER, TRAUMA, AND  
THE REHEARSALS TO RECOVERY*

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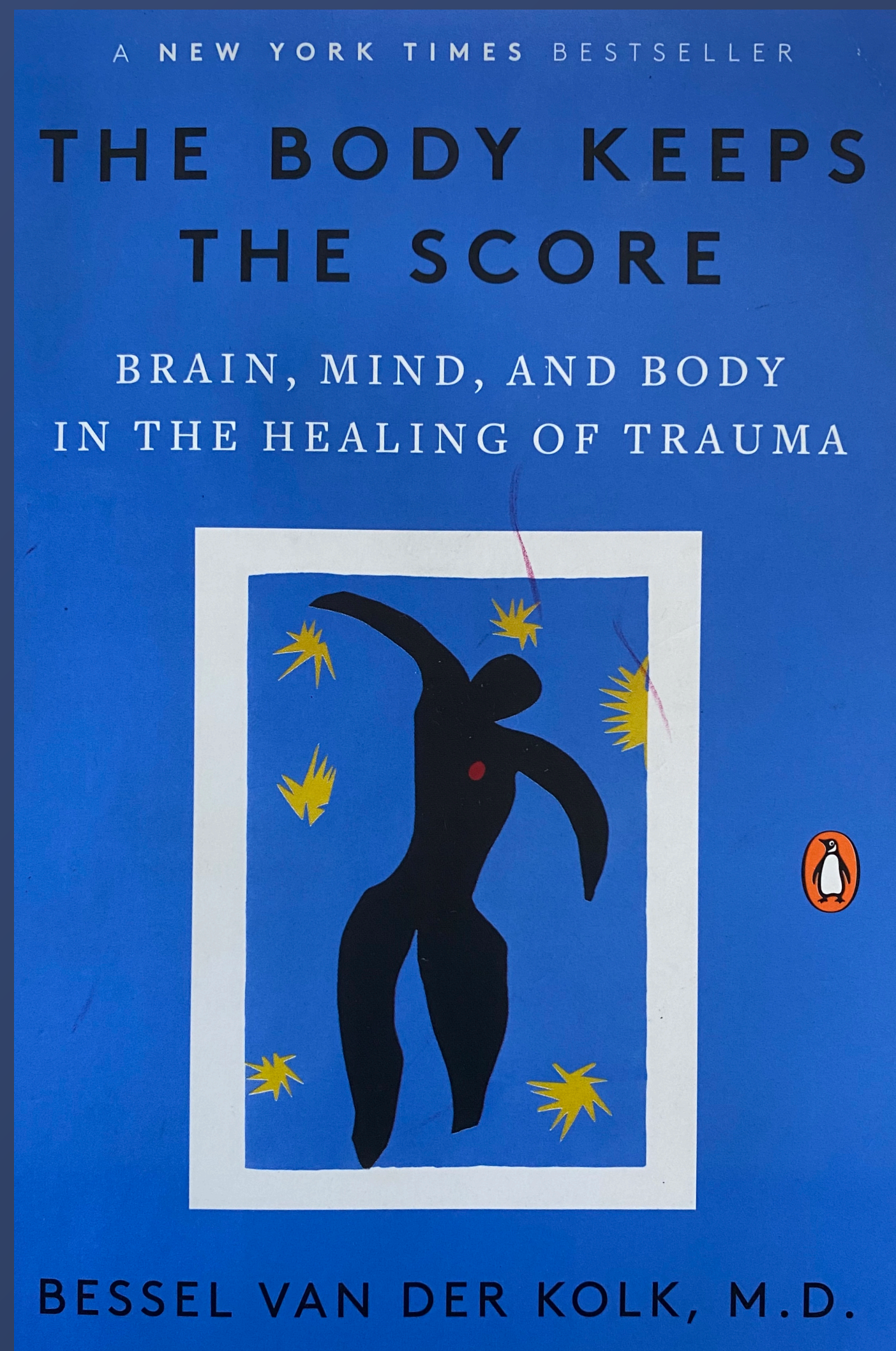
## DISCLAIMER

Trauma needs therapy beyond Theater.

## PREPARATION, PHYSICALIZATION, PERFORMANCE

Theater allows individuals to deal with trauma and unpleasant emotions by providing a platform to rehearse a method for recovery.





## THE CHALLENGE OF RECOVERY IS TO REESTABLISH OWNERSHIP OF BODY & MIND

1. Find a way to be calm & focused.
2. Learn to maintain that calm in response to triggers.
3. Find a way to be fully alive & engaged in the present.
4. Have no secrets from the self.



## TRAUMA AND HEALING

In order to find our voice, we have to be *in* our bodies – able to breathe fully and be able to access our inner sensations...

**Acting is an experience of using your body to take your place in life.**

(Bessel Van der Kolk, MD)

“The challenge of recovery requires pushing through blockages to discover your own truth, exploring and examining your own internal experience so that it can emerge in your voice and body on stage.”

-Bessel Van der Kolk, MD

## TRAUMA AND THEATER

Traumatized people are terrified to feel deeply because emotions lead to loss of control.

The essence of trauma is feeling godforsaken,

cut off from the human race.

Trauma is about trying to forget, hiding how scared, enraged or helpless you are.

(Van der Kolk)

Theater

...is about embodying and giving voice to emotions, becoming

rhythmically engaged

...involves a collective confrontation

with the realities of the human

condition.

...about finding ways of telling the truth to your audience.

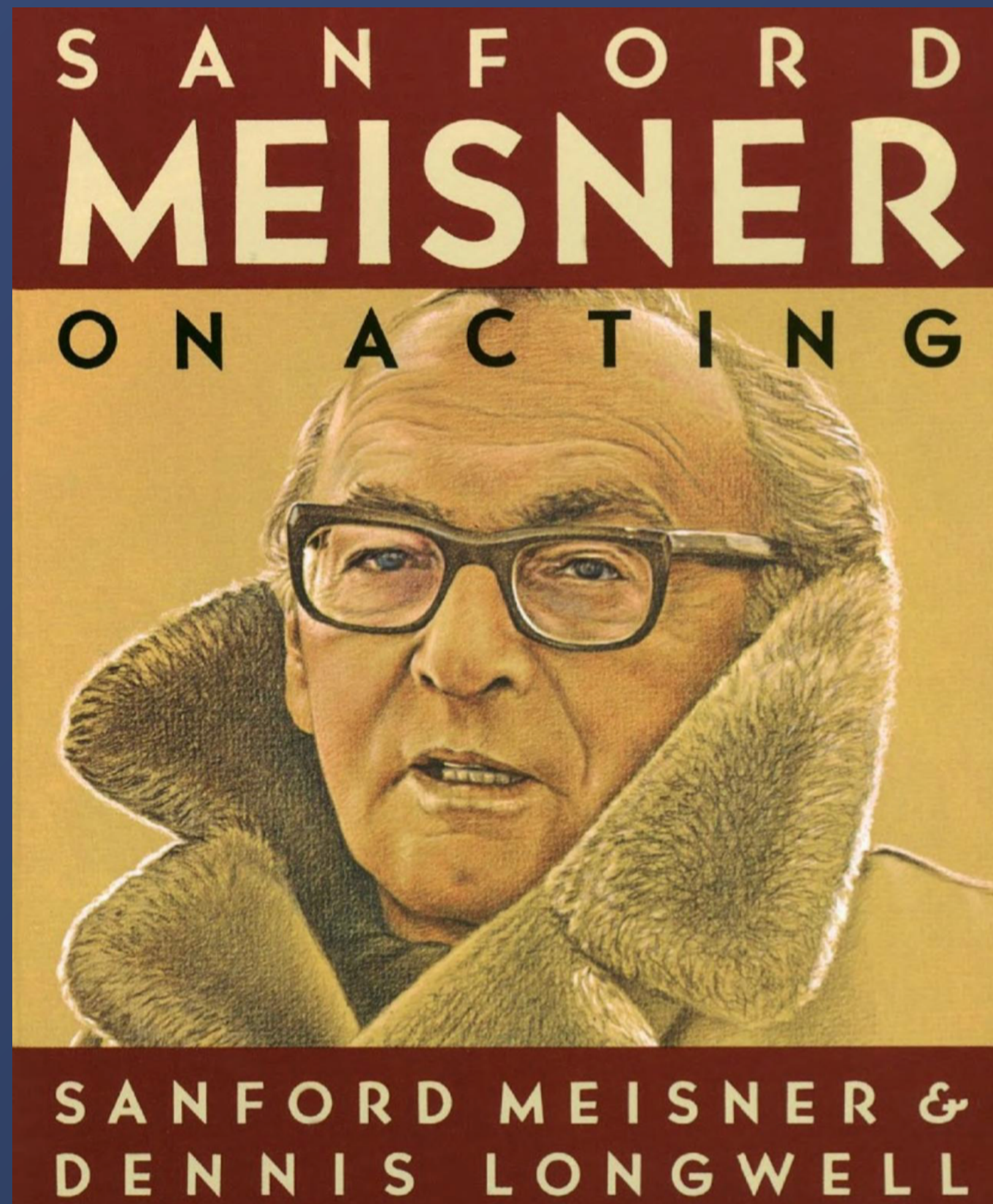
(Van der Kolk)

Theater

Activates Agency  
Provides a Safe Space  
Builds Community

PREPARATION, PHYSICALIZATION, PERFORMANCE



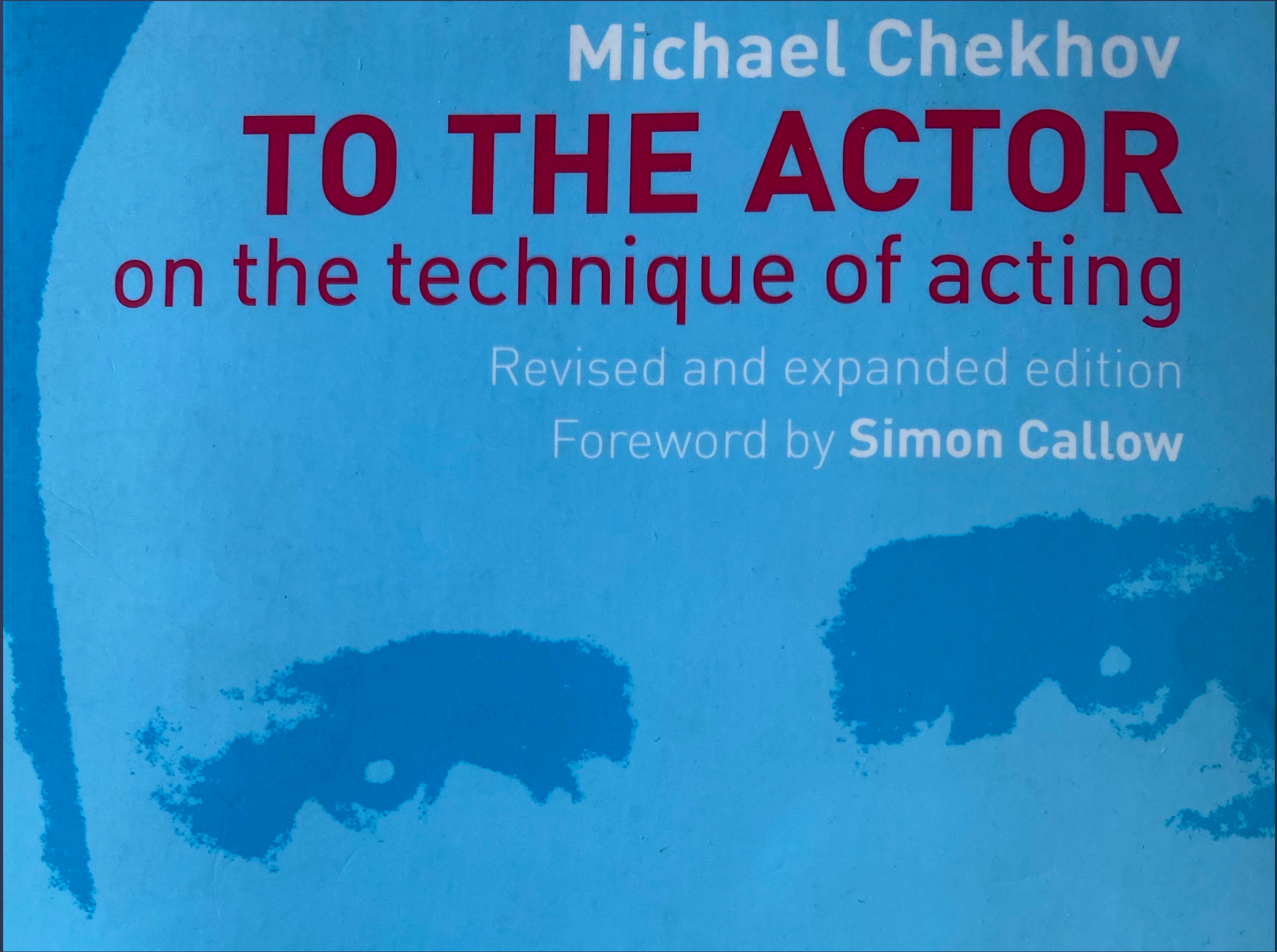


“Acting is living truthfully in imaginary circumstances.”

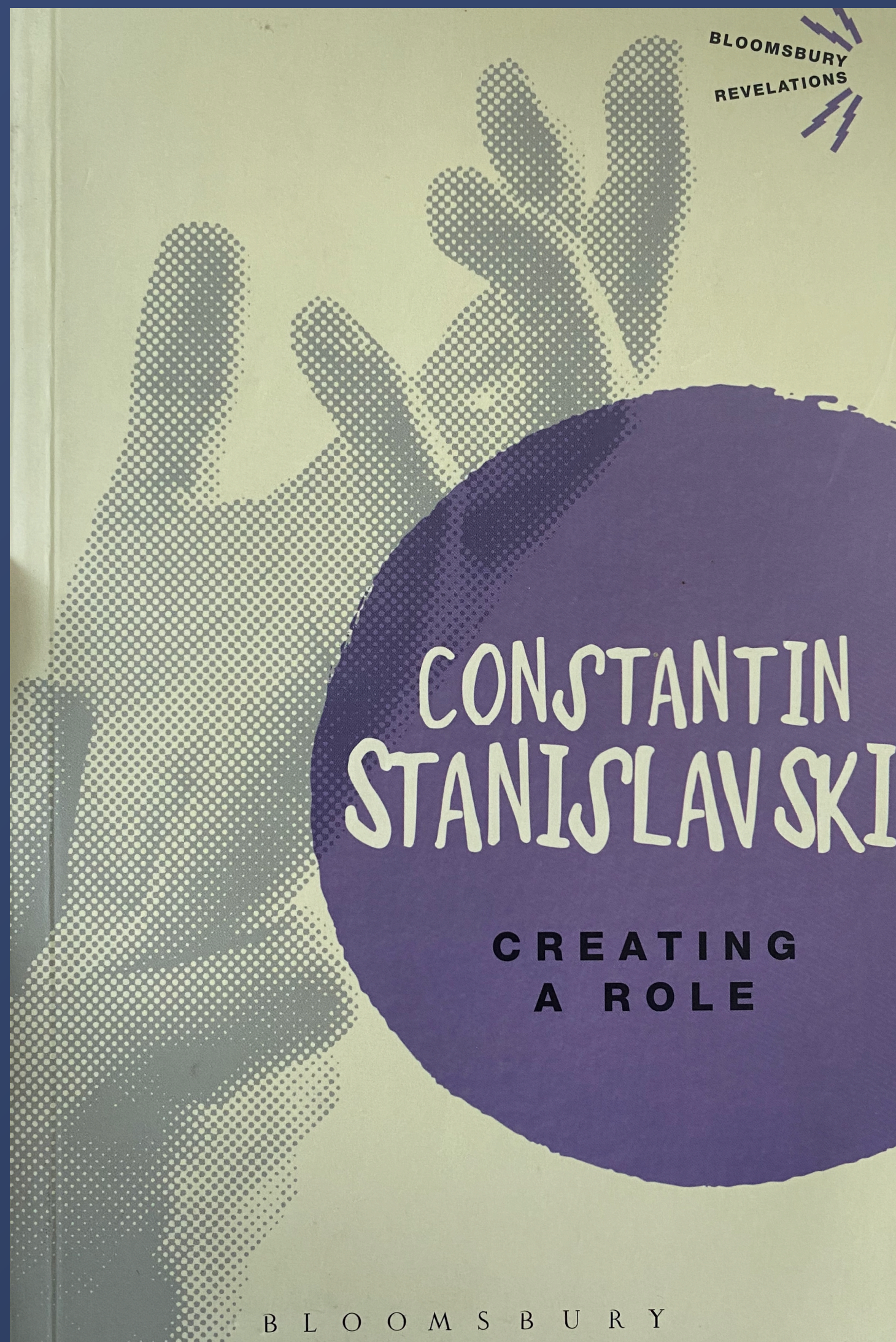
- SANFORD MEISNER



**ACTING TECHNIQUES: THE STANISLAVSKI SYSTEM , THE MICHAEL CHEKHOV PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURES**







“An actor must love dreams and know how to use them.

This imaginary life is created at will by the help of the actor’s own desire and in proportion to the creative intensity of the spiritual material he possesses or has accumulated in himself.”

- **CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKI**



# STANISLAVSKI

## CREATING A ROLE

The preparatory work on a role can be divided into three great periods:

### The Period of Study

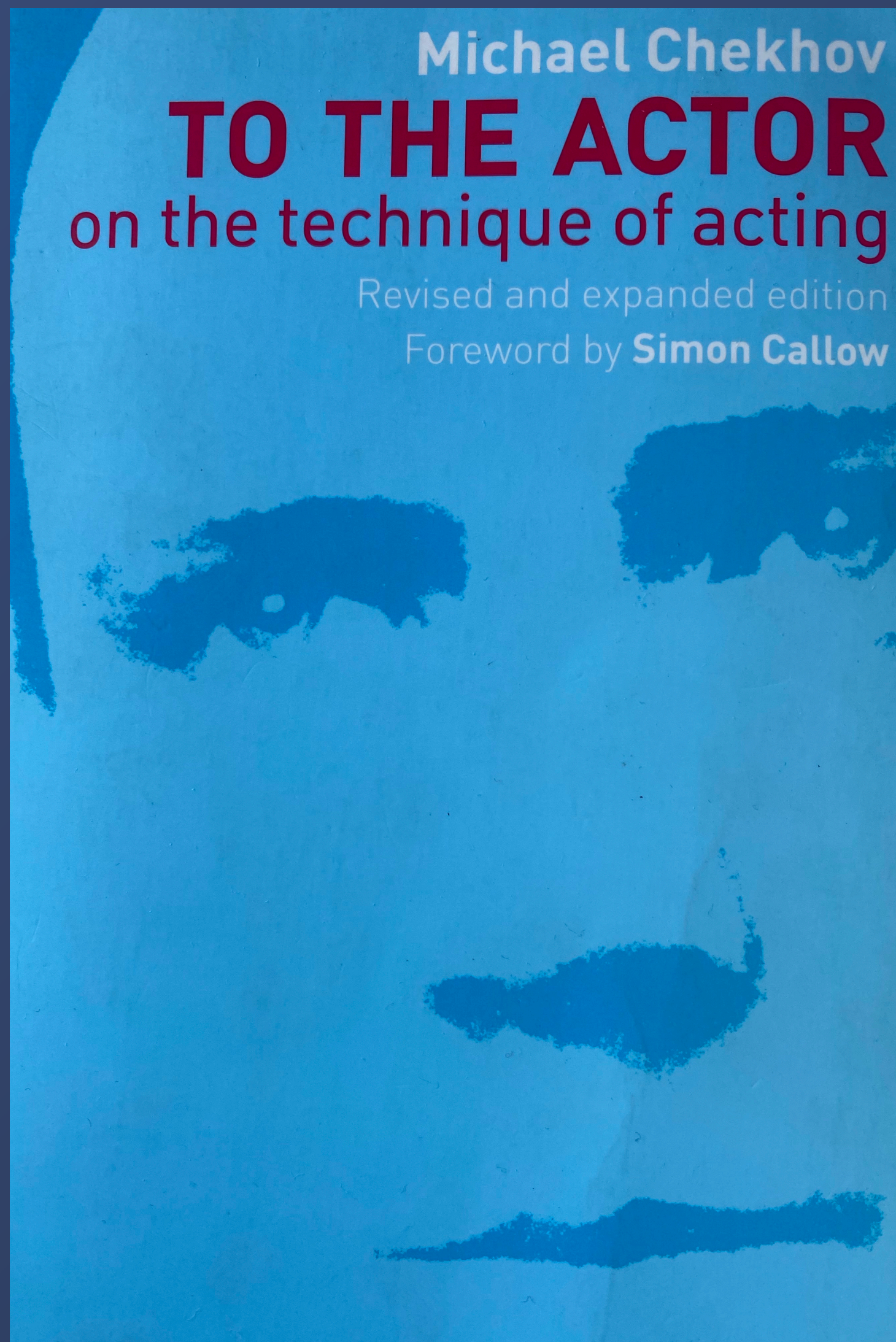
Textual Analysis and Imagination Work

### The Period of Emotional Experience

Inner Impulses, Creative Objectives, Ardor and the Superconscious.

### The Period of Physical Embodiment





“The actor, who must consider his body as an instrument expressing creative ideas on the stage, must strive for the attainment of complete harmony between the two, body and psychology.”

- MICHAEL CHEKHOV



## Actor Requirements:

### Sensitivity of body to the psychological creative impulses

Since the actor's body must be molded and re-created from inside, he must systematically feed his body with other impulses than those which impel him to a merely materialistic way of living and thinking.

### Richness of the psychology itself

Enlarge the circle of your interests; experience psychology of persons of other eras and nations; attempt to experience what they experience; ask yourself why they feel or act the way they do.

### Complete obedience of both body and psychology to the actor

Banish the element of "accident" from his profession and create a firm ground for his talent; reactivate the body and make it resilient.



Acting  
Preparation  
Physicalization  
Performance

**AGENCY, SAFE SPACE, COMMUNITY**

Preparation

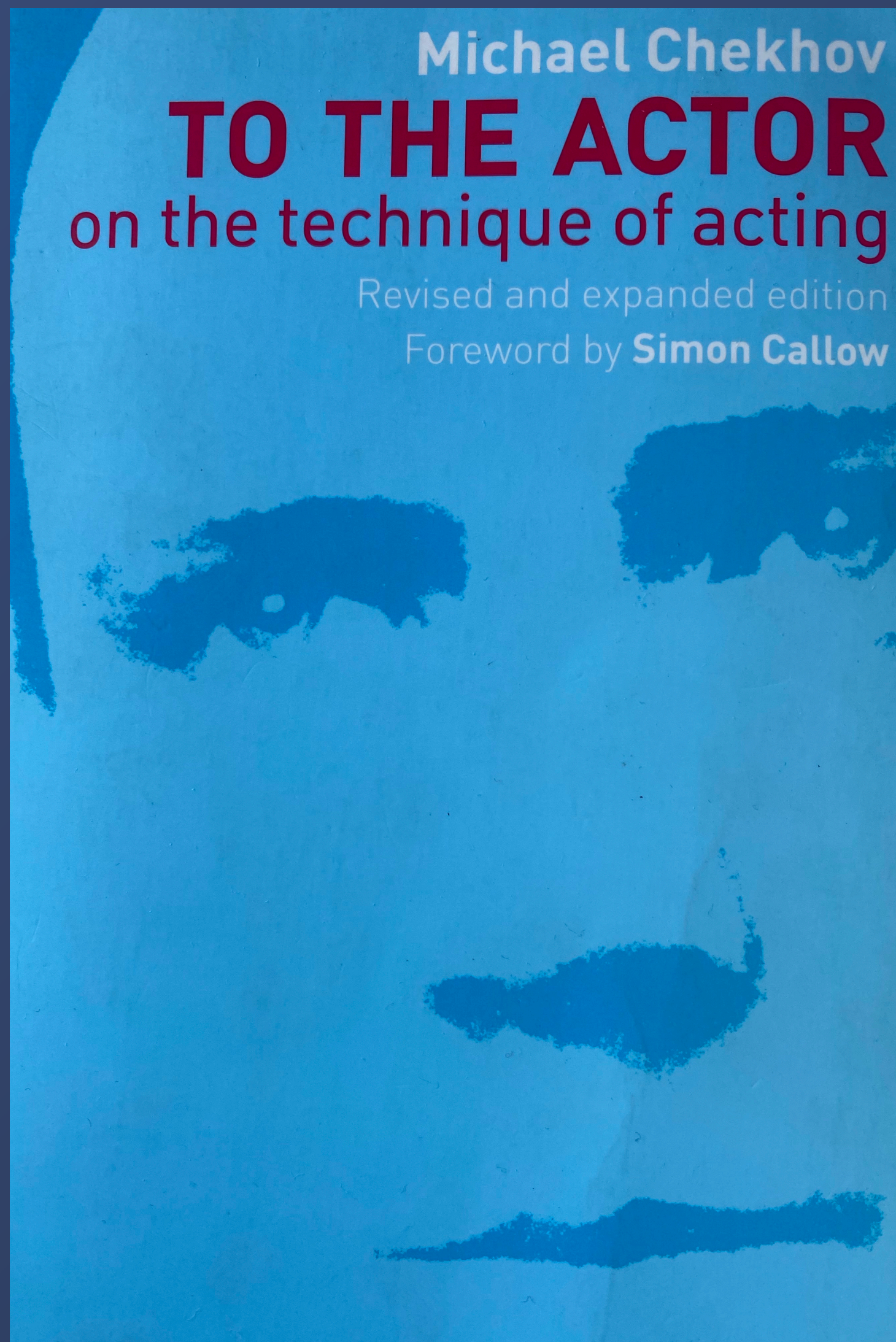
Breathing

Sense Activation

Imagination

**ACTING**





“Out of the visions of the past there flash here and there images totally unknown to you! They are pure products of your *Creative Imagination*.”

- MICHAEL CHEKHOV



A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

BRAIN, MIND, AND BODY  
IN THE HEALING OF TRAUMA



BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, M.D.

“Imagination gives us the opportunity to envision new possibilities — it is an essential launchpad for making our hopes come true.”

- **BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, MD**



Physicalization

Permission

Play

Precision

**ACTING**

Performance  
Vulnerability  
Courage  
Community

**ACTING**






**TINA PACKER  
BUILDS A THEATER**

“Training actors involves training people to go against that tendency [to cut ourselves off from the truth of what we’re feeling] — not only to feel deeply, but to convey that feeling at the every moment to the audience, so the audience will get it—an not close off against it.”

**TINA PACKER, FOUNDER OF SHAKESPEARE & COMPANY**



The bestselling sensation 

# DARING GREATLY

How the Courage  
to be Vulnerable  
Transforms the Way  
We Live, Love,  
Parent and Lead

'If you want to live more fully, just read this book'  
Sir Ken Robinson, author of *The Element*

**BRENÉ BROWN**

“Our job is not to deny the story, but to defy the ending — to rise strong, recognize our story, and rumble with the truth until we get to a place where we think, ‘Yes. This is what happened. And I will choose how the ends.’”

**- BRENÉ BROWN**



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