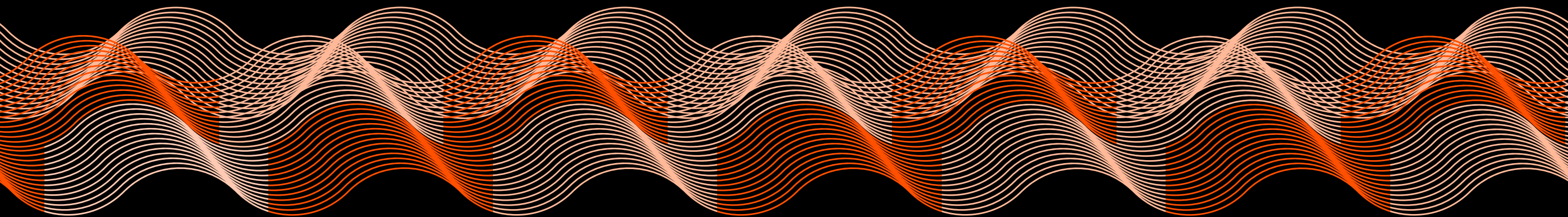


(Re)defining the Director's Book:

How (Genetic Research of)
Regiebücher Constructed
the *Regisseur*



EDITH CASSIERS

Résumé

De nombreux spécialistes du théâtre plaident pour la recherche (génétique du théâtre) des livres de mise en scène. La raison en est qu'ils forment une fenêtre cruciale sur les processus créatifs, les performances suivantes et la figure ainsi que les méthodes de travail du metteur en scène. Cet article examine comment (la recherche génétique de) ces notes ont (co-)construit le concept du directeur de théâtre. Comment et pourquoi les livres de mise en scène créent-ils et renforcent-ils la position, la fonction et le statut de cet « auteur » théâtral nouvellement trouvé ? Pour répondre à ces questions, je clarifie tout d'abord le concept du livre de mise en scène sur la base de ses différents noms et rôles. Deuxièmement, je propose une historisation du livre de mise en scène, suivie d'une discussion sur les aspects problématiques de la recherche génétique théâtrale des livres de mise en scène. Ce faisant, cet article espère faire la lumière sur l'enchevêtrement du livre du metteur en scène, la recherche génétique théâtrale et le concept du metteur en scène.

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Summary

Many theatre scholars plead for (theatre genetic) research of director's books, since they prove to be a crucial window on creative processes, the performances that follow, and the figure, as well as working methods, of the theatre director. This paper examines how (genetic research) of these notes (co-)constructed the concept of the theatre director. How and why do director's books create and strengthen the position, function, and status of this newly found theatrical 'author'? To answer these questions, I first clarify the concept of the director's book on the basis of its different names and roles. Second, I propose a historicising of the director's book, followed by a discussion of problematic aspects of theatre genetic research of director's books. In doing so, this paper hopes to shed light on the entanglement of the director's book, theatre genetic research, and the concept of the theatre director.

KEYWORDS

Director, director's book, *Regiebuch*, genetic criticism, theatre history

MOTS-CLÉS

Metteur en scène, livre de mise en scène, critique génétique, histoire du théâtre



Discovering the director's book: Introduction

It was a fascination with director's books — the notes of the theatre director during, and as part of, the creative process — that meant the beginning of a new theoretical domain. Theatre genetic research, a sister discipline of *critique génétique* or genetic criticism, promises the documentation, reconstruction, and analysis of creative processes of the performing arts. The relatively recent research field encompasses a systematic study of all the documents produced during the creative process (and thus including director's books) as well the study of rehearsal processes.¹

¹. See for rehearsal studies: Gay McAuley, 'Towards an Ethnography of Rehearsal', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 14.53 (1998), 75-85; Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*, ed. by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

The first theatre genetic researcher was, indeed, a researcher of director's books. The French Marie-Antoinette Allevy (1903–1966), an actor, director, and designer who would be best known under her exotic pseudonym Akakia-Viala, rigorously studied nineteenth-century 'livrets de mise en scène'. In 1938, she published the first critical edition of 'un cahier de mise en scène',² that would culminate in her doctoral thesis *La mise en scène en France dans la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle*.³ She focused on romanticism, since it was during this period that the figure of the director, 'le metteur en scène', would emerge and her much loved art form of 'la mise en scène' would come to full development. To sufficiently understand this evolution as well as appreciate 'cet art nouveau', studying 'livrets scéniques' is crucial, writes Akakia-Viala.⁴ She was followed by a generation of genetic scholars, that would eventually lead to the emergence of the theoretical domain in the 1960s.⁵

The study of director's books would continue to be an important part of theatre genetic research. Genetic study of director's books forms the basis of many works on direction, including directors' histories,⁶ theories

of direction,⁷ and studies of specific directors.⁸ Theatre genetics scholars like Josette Féral⁹ and Jean-Marie Thomasseau¹⁰ have pleaded for (theatre genetic) research of these director's books, since they prove to be a crucial window on the creative process, the actual performance, and the roles, as well as working methods, of the theatre director.

2. Namely *Édition critique d'une mise en scène romantique. Indications générales pour la mise en scène de Henri III et sa cour, drame historique en cinq actes, en prose, de M.A. Dumas, par Albertin, directeur de la scène près le Théâtre-Français* (1829) (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1938).

3. Doctorat ès lettres (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1938).

4. Allevy, *La mise en scène en France*, pp. 8, 42.

5. Almuth Grésillon, Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux and Dominique Budor, 'Pour une génétique théâtrale : prémisses et enjeux', in *Genèses Théâtrales* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2010), pp. 5–23 (p. 7).

6. See for example Toby Coles and Helen Krich Chinoy's well-known *Directors on Directing* (1976 (1953)), as well as *Directors' Theatre* that cites how director's books can lead to the reconstruction of both the performances and the working methods of certain directors (David Bradby and David Williams, *Directors' Theatre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988)).

7. See for example Simon Shepherd's overview and analysis of direction in Europe and the U.S. (2012), in which he discusses 'the director's book'. Simon Shepherd, *Direction: Readings in Theatre Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 39–41.

8. See for example publications on Max Reinhardt (Stefan Janson, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal's 'Jedermann' in Der Regiebearbeitung Durch Max Reinhardt* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1978); Manfred Grossmann and Max Reinhardt, *Max Reinhardt's Regiebuch Zu Macbeth* (1916) (Basle: Theatrekultur-Verlag, 1965), Max Reinhardt, *Max Reinhardt's Regiebuch Zu Faust I: Untersuchungen Zum Inszenierungsstil Auf Der Grundlage Einer Kritischen Edition*, ed. by Wilfried Passow (Munich: Kitzinger, 1971)); Samuel Beckett (Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*. Vol. 2. *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (London: Faber and Faber, 1992); Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days: The Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber and Faber, 1985); Samuel Beckett, *The Shorter Plays*, Vol. 4. *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (London: Faber and Faber, 1999); Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*. Vol. 1. *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by James Knowlson and Dougald McMillan (London: Faber and Faber, 1993). Samuel Beckett. *Krapp's Last Tape*. Vol. 3 *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by James Knowlson and Dougald McMillan (London: Faber and Faber, 1992)); Konstantin Stanislavski (Chinoy & Cole, Jones, David Richard, *Great Directors at Work: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Kazan, Brook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986)); Bertolt Brecht (Bertolt Brecht, 'Das Modellbuch. Anmerkungen Zur Aufführung 1949', in *Materialien zu Brechts 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder'*, ed. by Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main, 1964), pp. 9–80); and Hendrik Ibsen (Ellen Karoline Gjervan, 'Ibsen Staging Ibsen: Henrik Ibsen's Culturally Embedded Staging Practice in Bergen', *Ibsen Studies*, 11 (2011), 117–44, (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15021866.2011.617210>)). See also the series *Les Voies de la Création Théâtrale* (CNRS Editions). Each volume is dedicated to the creative process of a director, including Kantor, Brook, Meyerhold, Sellars, and Régy.

9. Josette Féral, 'Introduction: Towards a Genetic Study of Performance – Take 2', *Theatre Research International*, 33.3 (2008), 223–233.

10. Jean-Marie Thomasseau, 'Les manuscrits de la mise en scène', *L'Annuaire théâtral: Revue québécoise d'études théâtrales*, 29 (2001), 101–122; Jean-Marie Thomasseau, 'Les manuscrits préparatoires à la mise en scène du *Ruy Blas* de Brigitte Jaques-Wajeman (Comédie-Française, 2001)', in *Le Théâtre Au plus Près* (Saint Dennis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2005), pp. 197–220.

As these director's books are seen as 'the most important and faithful of (theatre genetic) documents',¹¹ one wonders how these notes have influenced our idea of the director. How has this extensive genetic research of director's books (co-)constructed the concept of the theatre director? How and why do director's books create and strengthen the position, function, and status of the director?

This paper has a tripartite structure. Firstly, I will clarify the concept of the director's book on the basis of its multiple names and roles. Secondly, I will propose a historicising of the director's book, which will be closely linked to similar historicising (genetic) research on the theatre director. Thirdly, I will point out some possible problematic aspects of the theatre genetic research of director's books. By doing so, this paper hopes to shed light on the entanglement of the director's book, theatre genetic research, and the concept of the theatre director.¹²

Defining the director's book

A difficulty from the beginning of research on director's books has been the definition of the research object. The director's book has many names (*Regiebuch*, director's notes, direction book, *didascalies*, *notes préparatoires de metteur en scène*, *livre de conduite*, *livret de mise en scène*, *cahier de mise en scène*, etc.), and even more meanings. I define the

director's book as the notes of the director (or figure(s) responsible for the direction) as part of the creative process. The director is the figure in whom the control of the *mechanics* (the practical and technical organisation) and the *aesthetics* of a production are centralised.¹³ That makes the director both artist and manager, including both artistic and organisational functions.¹⁴

The term director's book is often mistaken for, and used interchangeably with, the *promptbook*. However, where the director's book forms a part of, and platform for, the creative process, the promptbook is most often used at the end of the creative process to exhaustively describe the staging as a basis for future re-enactments, revivals, or reconstructions of the performance. This final form of describing notation is often created by someone else than the director, but frequently uses her/his notes as basis. The purpose of the promptbook is practical, and it is used for *organisation* and recording for *conservation*, while the director's book serves first and foremost the *creation*.

Director's books originally stand between the drama-text and the staging, consisting of the director's instructions for transforming the dramatic text into a performance text, to transpose it from page to stage. Though it originated in the margins of the dramatic text, the director's book is not solely condemned to a form of ink and paper, as it can also consist of other media — such as sketches, drawings, music scores, videos, and photos — regardless of any dramatic text. Furthermore, the

¹¹. Féral, p. 226.

¹². This paper is a direct result of my PhD research on historical and contemporary director's books, *PROMPT! From Page to Stage: A Theatre Study of the Postdramatic Director's Book*, which was part of the interuniversity research project *The Didascalical Imagination: Contemporary Director's Notes as Genetic Documents of the Creative Process* (Promoters: Prof. dr. Luk Van den Dries and Prof. dr. Johan Callens).

¹³. See Helen Krich Chinoy and Toby Cole, *Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theatre* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1976); Kimberly Jannarone, 'Chapter 6: The Artist of the Theatre', in *Artaud and His Doubles* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 133–158.

¹⁴. In what follows, I will mainly speak from the perspective of the singular director's figure. Nevertheless, the word 'director' can be interpreted as several people, as I will argue later on in this text.

word ‘book’ is misleading as it implies a clearly delineated beginning and end, as well as a structure and final form. In reality, a director’s book is often a (semi- or non-) structured bundle of notes (not infrequently in different media and formats), that is constantly changing and never-ending.

Roles of the *Regiebuch*

Based on my research of *Regiebücher*, I define the following roles for the director’s book:¹⁵ conception, analysis, modification, organisation and communication, observation, reflection, selection, compilation, correction, (intermedial) transposition, (authorship) construction, and (artistic) expression. In what follows, I will briefly explain each role.¹⁶

a) *Conception* seems to be the most obvious and possibly the most important role of the director’s book. The director’s book often forms the first platform for an original, creative idea, a concept for a work to be realised, a new design, set-up, or plan for a performance. Classical director’s books, such as those of Max Reinhardt and Konstantin Stanislavski, form fully worked-out plans in which, often, as much as possible is determined in advance, requiring only to be practiced and tested during rehearsals.

¹⁵. Compare with the tasks of the theatre director, formulated by researchers such as Annemarie Matzke (‘Das Theatre auf die Probe stellen. Kollektivität und Selbstreflexivität in den Arbeitsweisen des Gegenwartstheaters’, in *Arbeitsweisen im Gegenwartstheater*, ed. by B. Hochholdinger-Reiterer, M. Bremgartner, C. Kleiser and G. Boesch (Berlin: Alexander, 2015), pp. 15–33 (p. 16)) and Simon Shepherd (pp. 36–37).

¹⁶. It should be noted that not every director’s book covers all roles. Some roles are also taken over by other genetic documents, which may or may not be similar. Many of the roles also merge with each other and can operate in different time frames.

It is an extensive planning conducted in advance by the director on the basis of the theatre text, supplemented with notes, diagrams, and drawings about the mise-en-scène. Even in theatre where there is no text, or less text, we find such a preparatory function in director’s books. Both Romeo Castellucci and Robert Wilson meticulously prepare everything in their director’s books. The rehearsals are organised and structured on the basis of that detailed plan, to test the ideas and adjust them if necessary.¹⁷ Conception also stands for design. Directors develop decor, costume and lighting, movements, and blocking, often through sketches, diagrams, or photo collages, as can be seen in the director’s books of David Garrick, Duke Georg II of Saxe-Meiningen (*figure 1*),¹⁸ Edward Gordon Craig, and Bertolt Brecht.

b) *Analysis* of the source material is likewise an important role of the director’s book. Source material can be a dramatic text, but also other material such as a certain theme, a painting, music, or another theatre performance. Katie Mitchell emphasises the importance of analysing the major themes, characters, and context of a dramatic text as part of formulating the ‘directing script’ of the director.¹⁹

¹⁷. In contrast, some directors find the director’s book too compelling in its ‘recording’ of concepts. There are numerous examples of directors who do not prepare a conceptual preparation in a director’s book because, for example, they can empathize sufficiently with the dramatist and do not need further written preparation. Luk Perceval claims that, compared to the past, he now directs with ‘empty hands’, and no longer prepares in advance, but decides during rehearsals what will be worked on based on the mood of the group and the moment.

¹⁸. Source image: ‘1882—German—Duke of Saxe-Meiningen’s design for costumes for Wallenstein’, Hekman Digital Archive (Calvin University), <https://library.calvin.edu/hda/node/2010>.

¹⁹. Katie Mitchell, *The Director’s Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre* (London & New York: Routledge, 2010 (2008)), pp. 26–53.



FIGURE 1

A sketch by Duke Georg II Von Saxe-Meiningen with the costume designs for *Wallenstein* (1882).

- c) *Modification*: the director's book is often used to edit and adapt the source material for, and to, the performance. That can be the editing of text(s): for example, novels, letters, poetry, essays, film scripts, but mostly dramatic texts, as can be seen with actor-managers such as Edmund Kean. In Wilson's director's book, for his performance *The Blacks*, after Jean Genet's famous theatre text, we find 'dramatic structures', a list that summarises the details on the actors ('13 all black'), the scenography ('balcony w/ 3 chairs / throne in the middle'), proxemics (including who is on and off the balcony), and the selected scenes from the source text (including the key scene 'one black is accused of murdering a woman').²⁰ Other material (such as images, music, films, photos) can also serve as source material, as becomes clear in the (re)arranging of parts of the Bible and Greek mythology, references to visual art and film, and quotes of literature and music in the notebooks of Castellucci.
- d) *Organisation and communication* form an important aspect of the director as manager. The origin of the director's book lies in organising a performance (as we will see later on in this text), and many director's books are still used to organise and setting-up a production. Ivo Van Hove describes how he makes reports of production meetings in his notebooks, while Samuel Beckett's notebooks include many rehearsal plans.
- e) *Observation*: many director's books are used by the director as a form of log during the rehearsals. The director writes down what s/he sees, what s/he wants done differently and how, what needs to be worked on, etc. Often directing assistants take over this role, as was the case with Antonin Artaud and Vsevolod Meyerhold.

²⁰ Robert Wilson, *Visual Book 'Les Nègres' by Jean Genet* (Paris, Théâtre de l'Odéon), (Unpublished, 2013), pp. 15-17. Property of Robert Wilson.

f) *Reflection* sometimes features as well, as some director's books are used as journals or diaries, in which the director reflects on (the progress and evolution of) the creation.²¹ This reflection can become a philosophical movement, personal meditation, or dramaturgical exercise — as becomes clear in the notebooks of Heiner Goebbels, Jan Fabre, and Luk Perceval.

g) *Selection* becomes a crucial role of the director's book from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. From the 1960s, an (all-determining and narratologically linear) dramatic text is used less often, while improvisations became more important. The director's book often provides a platform for making selections from that large collection of material. Amongst the various ideas, improvisations, and rehearsals, the director's book can represent or reflect the choices and decisions they have made. Féral states that the 'decision making process' becomes clear from the director's notes, as they allow us 'to follow the choices, observations, modifications and hesitations leading up to the final decisions made for a production'.²² A director, such as Tim Etchells, becomes an editor, 'reviewing and shaping the devised material' of his company Forced Entertainment.²³ Castellucci indicates in lists what he does or does not want, or uses plus or minus signs to make a selection amongst the different ideas.²⁴

21. In *Le Théâtre Au Jour Le Jour* Julie Valero describes the 'journaux personnels et carnets de création' of Didier-Georges Gabily, Jean Luc-Lagarce, and Jean-François Peyret (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2013).

22. Féral, p. 226.

23. Shepherd, p. 156. Etchells describes himself as follows: 'I am like an organizer, a filter; but not a neutral filter, because it's ultimately what I like that gets prioritised' (Gabriella Giannachi and Mary Luckhurst, eds. *On Directing: Interviews with Directors* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999), p. 27).

24. See Timmy De Laet and Edith Cassiers, 'The Regenerative Ruination of Romeo Castellucci', *Performance Research: a Journal of Performing Arts*, 20.3 (2015): 18-28.

h) *Compilation*, namely structuring and assembling, follows selection. After the material has been edited, it is placed in a structure: a scene sequence that can serve as the skeleton of the performance. Many director's books include a chronological list of scenes — not unequal to the *canovacci* of the *Commedia dell'arte*. This form of compilation can consist of strategies such as assembly, collage, and montage. Elizabeth LeCompte, for example, works with video registrations during rehearsals and performances, and uses film editing principles to organise her material. Directors such as Robert Wilson draw up storyboards as part of the director's book. In what Wilson calls his 'visual book' for his performance *The Forest* (1988), we find a multitude of thumbnails on the page.²⁵ In the director's books of the earlier mentioned Etchells, we find montages of the different scenes on a temporal axis. Etchells calls these 'sequential time maps' and describes them as 'tracing on paper the circulation of different elements at play on stage and through time'.²⁶ According to Annemarie Matzke, this selection and structuring process forms an important transition point in the two phases of rehearsal: the research-oriented and performance-oriented phase.

i) *Correction* and (self-)reflexivity form crucial parts of both the rehearsal process and the director's book. Director's books are sometimes used to correct certain aspects of the performance. Errors are indicated, noted, and analysed — and sometimes even communicated — via the director's books. Luk Perceval records every rehearsal with a video camera, which he then edits at home. The next day, he confronts his actors with the registration of their

25. For a storyboard-like page, see Robert Wilson's 'visual book' for his performance *The Forest* (1988): Franco Quadri, Franco Bertoni, and Robert Stearns, *Robert Wilson* (Stuttgart: DACO Verlag Günter Bläse, 1997), pp. 191-193.

26. Tim Etchells, '(Two Minutes) Very Peaceful: A Note on Drawings for Performance', *PAJ A Journal of Performance and Art*, 36.2 (2014), 78-81 (p. 79).

actions and the mistakes they have made. In this way, Perceval says, they see their mistakes themselves.

- j) *Transposition*: The director's book plays an important role in transposing source material (a novel, a drama-text, an idea, an image, etc.) to the stage. The 'modification' function discusses how this material is adapted with the help of the director's book. The transition from source to target text always implies a transformation over various semiotic and medial systems. In this way, the director's book can also be used to consciously transpose some (medial and/or semiotic) properties of the source material to the performance.
- k) *Construction* of authorship is likewise an underestimated role of the director's book. This role also has an impact on the creation process, including in the hierarchy between the director and his or her other employees. In what follows, this paper will delve deeper into how director's books construct the authorship of the theatre director.
- l) *(Artistic) expression* is a role of the director as artist (rather than as manager). The director's book can also serve as a platform for artistic expression and become an artwork on its own. Many of the preparatory drawings in which Edward Gordon Craig designs the *mise-en-scène* for, or conceptualises the atmosphere, of a future performance would be seen as autonomous aesthetic products.²⁷ While Craig would produce a large number of sketches, etchings, drawings, scale models, etc., as well as writing different theoretical works on the art form of theatre, he would create only very few productions that would never be very successful. His visually impressive director's books have him nevertheless secured a place within the canon of theatre directors.

²⁷ See a.o. Jennifer Buckley, "'Symbols in Silence': Edward Gordon Craig and the Engraving of Wordless Drama", *Theatre Survey*, 54.2 (2013): 207–30.

Dating the director's book

Based on the distinction between the promptbook and the *Regiebuch*, we could produce a timeline of director's books consisting of three phases that correspond with the history of the director. In directors' studies, these periods are most often emphasised as clear, sharp breaks. In what follows, however, I will argue for a continuum, rather than these constructed categories.

First, there are the *predecessors of the director's book*, before the figure of the director emerged. I would distinguish the following as the most well-known predecessors: *didaskaliai* from classical antiquity, medieval *abregieten* or *conduites*, Elisabethan *foul* and *fair copies*, *guide* from Italian scenographers, *canovacci* from the Commedia dell'Arte, and *didascalies* from Molière. Post-Enlightenment, there are the English *promptbooks* (for example the *preparation promptbooks* of David Garrick and the *promptbooks* of John Philip Kemble, both actors and stage managers), German Intendants and their *instructions*, and French *livrets de mise en scène* from the *metteurs-en-scène* (1800–1850). The *abregites* of the Middle Ages, for example, came into existence to steer the complex mystery and miracle plays. The 'maître du jeu' had to maintain order through cueing, timing, and stage direction while he stood amongst the many (amateur) actors that had to perform on pageant wagons in the middle of the streets.

The relatively recent figure of the theatre director would arise at the end of the nineteenth, and beginning of the twentieth, century. In her well-known and much-cited text, 'The Emergence of the Director', Helen Krich Chinoy discusses how the director's predecessors (such as the *didaskalos* in Classical Greece, the *maître du jeu* in medieval theatre, the actor manager during Elisabethan theatre, and Molière) were solely

stage managers, as directors (as we know them today) were simply unnecessary in those times. Theatre was a harmonious art form with a cohesive audience.²⁸ Theatre consisted of a single creative process: dramatic conception and theatrical performance went hand in hand.²⁹ These performances did not need an ‘integrating specialist’, since they already had a more *innere Regie*, which can be defined as ‘unity and control intrinsic to the theatre arts and to the social conception of theatre’.³⁰ Modern

theatres, on the other hand, tend more towards an *äussere Regie*, ‘a unity imposed by historically accurate sets and costumes, by realistic imitation and ultimately by the external hand of the director charged with finding a collective focus for theatre in an atomised society’.³¹

28. Chinoy & Cole, p. 4.

29. Ibidem.

30. Chinoy & Cole, p. 13.

31. Ibidem, see also Jannarone, p. 222.

To follow this theory with an example, Elizabethan theatre and theatre from classical antiquity were both characterised by a cohesive society that had a clear (collective) idea of both theatre and life. There were some fixed values that the theatre spectators and makers shared, for example myths and rituals in classical antiquity, and Bible stories that formed the source for medieval drama — making stage managers primarily responsible for integrating and organising existing elements, rather than creation or individual interpretation. Due to the disappearance of an ‘inner direction’, the figure of the director could arise. Researchers such as Jannarone and Chinoy have argued that, since the Renaissance, the theatre has lost its shared values and no longer forms a socially representative and collective art or experience. The director must offer an alternative to this loss, by creating unity. S/he needs to forge the various elements of a theatre performance into an organic and homogeneous whole, so that the fragmented audience can still experience it as a collective.

These promptbooks or predecessors of the *Regiebuch* are thus determined by the absence of the director’s most important characteristic:

artistic unity. These instruments form a platform for practical guidelines, rather than creative ones; they serve organisation and production instead of artistry. They serve the staging of the performance: when actors need to be warned, when certain objects have to be moved, and so forth. Cues and blocking, scenery and props, music and sound effects, lighting and special effects, bell and whistle signals, curtains that open and close, the entrance and leaving of actors, are all determined in these booklets.³² However, this distinction between artistic and practical unity cannot always be maintained. Even these early figures and instruments were already moving into the field of artistic creation.

A clear example of this is the Intendant of the German court theatre, for example Goethe, as well as the French *metteurs-en-scène*. Most directors’ studies define Georg II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, as the first real director, but it is not a coincidence that this statement sparks much discussion. Some see Madame Vestris (*figure 2*),³³ David Garrick (*figure 3*),³⁴ John Kemble, Edmund Kean, Molière, Konrad Ekhof, or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as the first directors — most often due to their organisation of rehearsals and (especially) elaborate (predecessors of) director’s books, with an emphasis on scene and costume design, that already hints at a desire for a harmonious performance.³⁵ At the end of the nineteenth century, spectacle became increasingly important, something which managers such as Kean, Phelps, Irving, and the French *metteurs-en-scène* took advantage of, through the inclusion of melodramatic details and/or striving for historical accuracy. ‘By the end

32. See Edward A. Langhans, ‘Research Opportunities in Early Promptbooks’, *Educational Theatre Journal*, 18.1 (1966), 74–76.

33. Source image: Folger Shakespeare Library, Folgerpedia, PROMPT Ham. 16.

34. Source image: Folger Shakespeare Library, Shakespeare in Performance, LLL2.

35. See Rebecca Schneider and Gabrielle H. Cody, *Re:direction: A Theoretical and Practical Guide* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001); Edward Braun, *The Director & The Stage: From Naturalism to Grotowski* (London: A&C Black, 1982), p. 7.

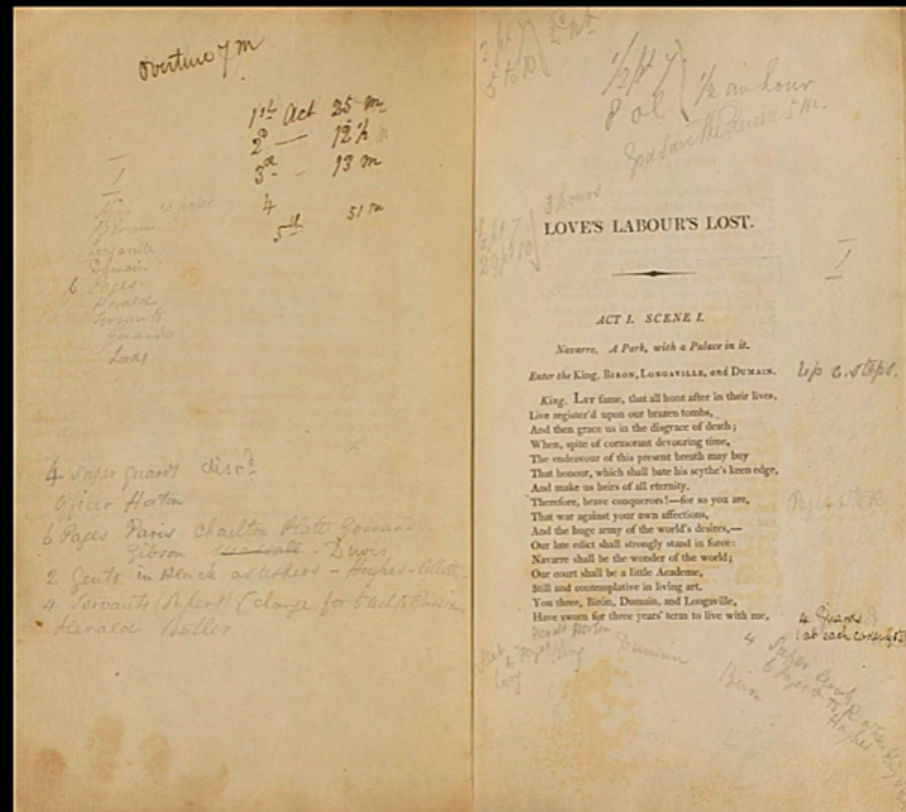


FIGURE 2
A page from the promptbook of Mme. Vestris for Shakespeare's *Love Labour's Lost* (1839).

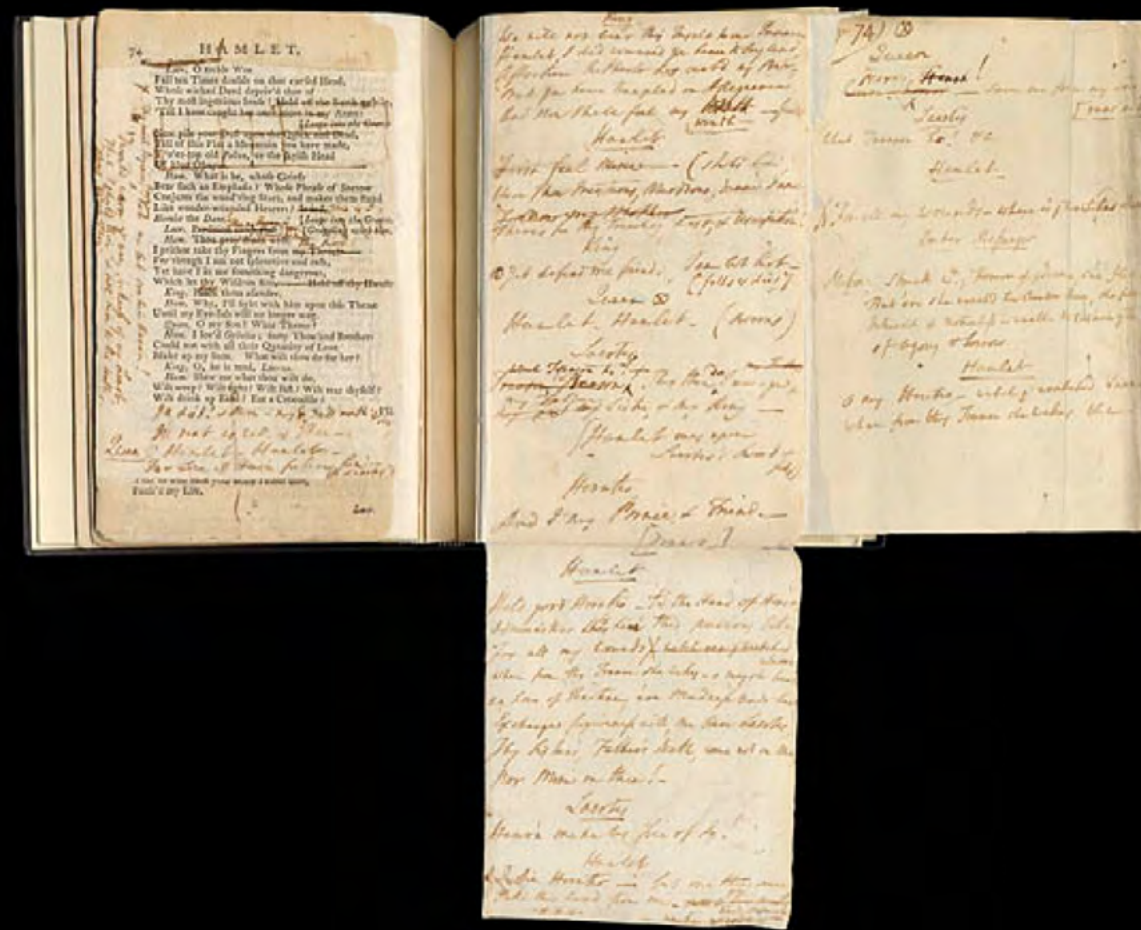


FIGURE 3
A page from David Garrick's prompt book for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1772-73) in which he rewrites the original text as well as formulates stage directions.

of the nineteenth century,' writes promptbook scholar Charles Shattuck, 'there appear many books which attempt to capture in explicit statement the whole picture, rationale, and psychology of production, with the business of the central characters, too, written out in full'.³⁶

The second phase would be the heyday of directing books, 'the golden age of the direction book', according to historian, semiotician and theatre scholar Marco De Marinis.³⁷ Director's books, amongst different forms of theatre notation, would come to full bloom with the rise of the director, running from the end of the nineteenth century up to, and including, the first half of the twentieth century. Two tendencies in the form of the director's book emerge at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the one hand, we can distinguish historical and psychological realism and naturalism (represented by the notes by the Meiningen triumvirate, especially the sketches of George II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen); the *Regiebog* of Scandinavian directors, such as Henrik Ibsen; the *Didascalies* of André Antoine; and the *Planirovka*'s of Konstantin Stanislavski. On the other hand, there is formalism, expressionism, and symbolism represented by the sketches of Adolphe Appia and the drawings of Edward Gordon Craig. Where the notes of the first group overflow with the precise directions regarding props and game movements, the second group will excel in abstraction.

Yet that dichotomy is only an appearance. Although the object may differ from their instructions (compare the exact number of glasses on the table at the inn in a production by Antoine, with the highly focused abstract mask changes in Craig's drawings), the similarity lies in

³⁶. See Charles H. Shattuck, *The Shakespeare Promptbooks: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 12.

³⁷. Marco De Marinis, 'From Script to Hypertext: Mise En Scène and the Notation of Theatrical Production in the Twentieth Century', trans. by James T. Chiampi, *Gestos*, 23 (1997), 9-37 (p. 24).

the precision with which these instructions are given. All these directing books excel in detail and purposeful *didascalia* — as, for example, in the *mises en scène* of Jacques Copeau and the scores of Meyerhold. No aspect of theatre production is too small to not elicit rigid guidelines from the director. In this way, Reinhardt's *Regiebuch* is also the *summa summarum* of this golden age. In Reinhardt's directing books, realism and naturalism, on the one hand, and formalism and symbolism, on the other, come together in what for many is the pinnacle of the directing book.³⁸ That striving for totality shows the ambition of the emerging director. Guided by the *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory, no element of the theatre performance would escape his eye. The director combines overview with detail.

While the second period would mean a flourishing period for the director's book, the director's book would change dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century. This becomes clear in the *Modellbücher* of Bertolt Brecht; the *Dessins-écrits* of Antonin Artaud; the *Notebooks* of Samuel Beckett; and the director's notes of postdramatic directors, such as Romeo Castellucci, Jan Fabre, Jan Lauwers, Luk Perceval, Heiner Goebbels, and Robert Wilson. Influenced by technical and media developments (such as the use of computers and the World Wide Web), a wide range of new forms of director's books are created, ranging from conceptual notes and sketches to techniques from other areas such as scores, storyboards, soundtracks, and video editing. The importance of

the dramatic text decreases; and the importance of performance, image, and ritual increases ('performative turn' and 'pictorial turn'). Increased rehearsals, improvisations, and experiments put more emphasis on the creative process, changing the nature of the director's book.

De Marinis states that the director's book is in crisis in the second half of the twentieth century, due, amongst other factors, to the increased idiosyncrasy of these director's books as a consequence of technological developments and a decrease in the importance of the text. However, I disagree, as idiosyncrasy and an individual form are characteristics throughout the histories of the director's book: Stanislavski's *Planirovka*'s shows an increased attention to various elements of the performance; in Meyerhold's scores, text serves no longer as a structuring element, as he also experiments with musicalisation; Brecht relies heavily on new media such as photography as he captures parts of the much more extensive rehearsal process; Artaud's director's notes question text and language, and the associated *logos*, as they present a dominating image, and an entanglement of text and drawing;³⁹ and Beckett's work displays an increased attention for staging, instead of the spoken text on the stage, as well as a remarkable use of diagrams in his notebooks. These 'director's books in crisis' are actually a continuation of a trend that shaped the so-called golden age of the director's book.

There seems to be more of a curve or continuum with two climaxes (Fischer-Lichte's two performative turns), rather than a radical break. Just as with the first performative revolution, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, a similar shift occurs at the end of the twentieth century, leading to the second performative turn, and therefore a second golden age of directing books. Even more

³⁸. See for a clear example: Kurt Ifkovits, "'Schwer aufzuschreiben. Keine Noten fuer Sprechen". Über Regiebücher im Allgemeinen und jene von Max Reinhardt im Besonderen', *Lesespuren – Spurenlesen oder Wie kommt die Handschrift ins Buch? Von sprechenden und stummen Annotationen*, ed. by Marcel Atz and Volker Kaukoreit (Vienna: Praesens, 2011), pp. 138–150 (pp. 144–145). The pages of the theatre text are glued in a larger notebook, with considerably enlarged the margins. On the right page is the theatre text, on the left page are sketches for the scene design, including dramaturgical interpretation. In the margins of the theatre text there are instructions regarding the saying of the text as well as the actions of the actors.

³⁹. See for examples Camille Morando, *Autoportraits et glossolalies: la douloureuse musique d'Antonin Artaud* (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2010).

than before, ‘a shift of focus from “text” to “performance” aesthetics’ is taking place.⁴⁰ These changes are represented in the director’s book: the (static) text dissolves, the image becomes more important. Rather than linguistic, these works become meta-lingual, with different repetitions, sampling, appropriation, references, and citations. More new media will replace the conventional paper carrier. The fixed values and perception of the reader are (even further) destabilised. A certain participation from the spectator or reader is expected. In contrast to the strict direction plans of the directors at the time of the first performative revolution, these direction books become more fluid, ephemeral, and ever-changing. Pavis notes how notation in the second half of the twentieth century is no longer a simple transcription mechanism, but the outline of the performance, as well as the laboratory of its meaning.⁴¹

The director's book vs. the dramatic text

Following this brief definition as well as my (undoubtedly too broad) historicising of the director’s book, the rest of this paper will focus on the relationship between the director’s book and theatre genetic research. I will discuss several aspects of director’s book research that will not only shed light on the evolution of theatre genetic research, but (first and foremost) on how research on the director’s book has helped shape our idea of the director, thus reflecting biases present in theatre genetic research.

⁴⁰. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 22.

⁴¹. Pavis, ‘Reflections on the Notation’, p. 118.

As a first aspect, I want to draw attention to a paradox within director’s book research that touches (in my opinion) the heart of theatre genetic research. The director would be first and foremost the author of the mise-en-scène (in contrast to the playwright or dramatist, the author of the dramatic text). Indeed, this evolution is palpable throughout the history of the director’s book, taking the form of two tendencies. Firstly, there is an increase of textual emendations (rewriting, deleting, supplementing, moving, etc.). Text is edited more radically and would even disappear in some director’s books of the postdramatic period. Secondly, there is an increase in stage directions. In classical antiquity, the dramatic text author had complete control over the staging of the text that he himself had written, so that stage directions (mostly in line with the dramatic text) could be given orally during rehearsals. Later forms of theatre became more complex (especially with the development of the art form of the mise-en-scène) and/or were written by someone other than the staging, so that more had to be planned in advance.

And yet, most director’s book research focuses mainly on the theatre text. According to these theories, the basis for the director’s book is always formed by the dramatic text⁴² and the director’s book consists mainly of adaptations, additions, and deletions of this dramatic text.⁴³ Moreover, the director’s book was (and is) created to draw up the plan to stage a text; to translate the dramatic text into a performance text; to transpose the dramatic text from page to stage.

Theatre genetics, resulting from the highly text-centred theoretical domain of genetic criticism, always discuss director’s books in relation to

⁴². See a.o.: Passow, ‘Probleme der Regiebuchforschung’, in *Regie in Dokumentation*, ed. by Margret Dietrich, p. 149.

⁴³. See a.o.: Fernando De Toro and Carole Hubbard, *Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. xiii; Stratos E. Constantinidis, *Theatre Under Deconstruction? A Question of Approach* (New York: Garland Science, 1993), p. 135.

the dramatic text. Text is (still) considered the most important semi-otic sign of the theatre — the beginning and end. The dramatic text remains the epicentre of theatre genetic analysis.⁴⁴ Scenic genetic documents thus remain a blind spot in theatre genetic research, creating a substantial lack in the study of director's books, in particular, and theatre in general. Although the importance of these often unwritten documents is certain, these genetic traces are often considered 'too difficult' to classify into a sequence of chronologically marked processes.⁴⁵ A consequence is that information concerning the staging or mise-en-scène is remarkably downplayed, ignored, or neglected. For example, Langhan argues that the cohesion between the performance and the text is crucial in early prompt books, although it is precisely this aspect that is often denied and dismissed as 'playhouse corruption'.⁴⁶ Literary aspects are given much more value than theatrical aspects: the text is still more important than the mise-en-scène or performance.

This interpretation of the dramatic text, as the most important guiding element of both the director's book and the theatre performance to which it leads, forms the crucial basis of Western theatre tradition. Ever since Aristotle's privilege of the text over the performance (*opsis*), there has been what Pavis has described as a 'text-centric' vision in theatre.⁴⁷ This 'text-centric vision' confirms 'the thought that a mise-en-scène

is an actualisation, manifestation, or concretisation of elements already contained within the text'.⁴⁸ However, different forms of contemporary theatre have no dramatic text, or only a few fragments of improvised text. Text is only one theatre element among the many elements, such as in postdramatic theatre.

A direct consequence for director's book research is the main focus on the relationship between the mise-en-scène and the dramatic text, often framing the director as the antagonist of the playwright. These directors evade the 'tyranny' of the playwright's text,⁴⁹ have a 'bold liberation of theatre from the chains of literature'.⁵⁰ The director was seen as a shredder of dramatic texts, who used them as a vehicle for his or her personal vision, goals, and wishes. A director is 'capable (or culpable) of marking a text produced on stage with the stamp of a personal vision', writes Pavis.⁵¹ Director's book research would focus on the intense interaction and alternately complementary and competitive relationship between the stage directions of the playwright and the director, as for example in studies of director's books of Stanislavski, Reinhardt, and even Antoine. Some directors pushed the text to the edge, such as Craig and Meyerhold, while others bowed deeply to the intentions of and out of respect for the drama author, such as Bloch, Antoine, and Copeau.

This is linked to the dichotomy of text and mise-en-scène within theatre genetic research. Bernard Dort, for example, identifies text as permanence while he baptises the scene as ephemerality. The distinction between these two terms — text and mise-en-scène — is also related

⁴⁴. See Bernard Dort, 'Le texte et la scène. Pour une nouvelle alliance', in *Le spectateur en dialogue* (Paris: P.O.L, 1987); Almuth Grésillon, 'La double contrainte: Texte et scène dans la genèse théâtrale', in *La loi musicale: Ce que la lecture de l'histoire nous (dés)apprend*, ed. by Danielle Cohen-Levinas (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1999), pp. 339-58; Michel Contat, 'La genèse sociale des Séquestrés d'Altona de Jean-Paul Sartre', *Théâtre. Genesis: Manuscrits, Recherche, Invention*, 26 (2005), 91-100.

⁴⁵. Almuth Grésillon and Jean-Marie Thomasseau, 'Scènes de genèses théâtrales', *Théâtre. Genesis: Manuscrits, Recherche, Invention*, 26 (2005), 19-34 (p. 28).

⁴⁶. Langhan, pp. 74-76.

⁴⁷. Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003).

⁴⁸. Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads*, p. 203.

⁴⁹. Avra Sidiropoulou, *Authoring Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 135.

⁵⁰. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 284.

⁵¹. Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads*, p. 198.

to the emergence of theatre genesis. It was not until the 1960s that a distinction was made between the research object of the dramatic text, on the one hand, and the mise-en-scène or staging on the other. Grésillon, Mervant-Roux and Budor call the separation of text and scene one of the three biggest problems of theatre genetic research today. They therefore propose to replace the 'vieux schéma texte / scene' with a 'modèle dynamique'.⁵² Peter Boenisch would not only lay the origin, but also the essence of *Regie* in the tension between text and mise-en-scène.⁵³

The conflict between text and theatre, word and image, paper and stage is radicalised in these director's books, but it must actually be nuanced. As Jennifer Buckley explained particularly fascinatingly on the basis of the director's books by Craig and Lothar Schreyer: on the one hand, these (avant-garde) director's books sharpen the dichotomy between text and scene; on the other hand, they study alternative relationships between the dramatic text and the mise-en-scène. The result is not only new proposals, but also a rejection of the dichotomy. The director's book, as an intermediary between text and performance, literature and theatre, can help to strengthen the tension within that classical dichotomy and in that way also completely eliminate it.

⁵². Grésillon, Mervant-Roux and Budor, p. 11.

⁵³. Peter M. Boenisch, *Directing Scenes and Senses: The Thinking of Regie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

The director's book as the product of a single author

A second problematic aspect of director's book research, which reflects a similar problem of theatre genetic research in general, is the attribution of the creation of genetic documents (including director's books) to a single author.

One of the reasons that Chinoy makes a distinction between the modern director and his or her predecessor 'stage managers', is that she claims that not one person was responsible for the complete construction of an early theatre performance. Often there was an army of employees behind these pre-directors, as for example the *archon* and the *choragus* stood next to the *didaskalos*. However, even in studies of the predecessors of the director's book, researchers would project a single author behind these notes, despite that the authoritarian and all-determining voice derived from those pages often consisted of different voices, such as in the case of Mons' Passion Play, where the duo Guillaume and Jehan Delechiere were the *conducteurs des secrets*.

Authorship implies a singular, individual practice. Nevertheless, theatre is by definition a collaborative art. The practice of various (author) directors consists of an army of assistants and dramaturges, with whom directors such as Meyerhold, Artaud, Stanislavski, and Reinhardt consult and collaborate. Although directors have their own personal notes, sketches etc., more often (especially with larger productions) various other employees will make additions in the form of writing notes, making sketches, and making corrections. The director is often not the only author of his or her director's book(s). Though this collaboration leaves

many traces in the direction book, most director's books are seen as the result of the work of one person.

To defend author theory in the field of cooperation, one argues that the director acts as coordinator of the various theatrical elements and therefore bears ultimate responsibility. Often that final responsibility lies in selection and compilation — where the entire team (consisting of the actors, the designers, the technicians, the composer, etc.) generates material, the director will select from this material and decide how this will be represented. Directors carry the 'power of decision-making'⁵⁴ — as has already been argued above. The author may not be the only editor, but he acts as a 'controlling body' and is responsible for the 'interrelation' between the individual theatre elements.⁵⁵ Reinhardt's *Regiebuch* was called the 'Master book', as it would be the summary of all the decisions taken and selected designs on the basis of the ideas captured in the books of his 'corps of *Regisseurs*'.⁵⁶

Yet that statement cannot always be substantiated. Reinhardt, for example, asked Edvard Munch to design the scenography, making this last (very auctorial) poetics seep into the creative process. Likewise, Duke Georg II would be seen as the first and only director of the Meiningen company (on the basis of his director's book, his sketches), despite the crucial roles of Ellen Franz and Ludwig Chro-negk in the creative process. By doing so, full collaboration is reduced

to the service of a single author.⁵⁷ Although collaboration is one of the core principles of the creative processes within the performing arts, a strong tendency can be seen to attribute the creation of a work to a single author. This reinforces the essentially romantic idea that works of art are the product of a unique creative spirit — regardless of collaborations, inspirations, or circumstances that influence the final form. It also ignores the way in which new work formats (such as theatre collectives, improvisation groups, etc.) deliberately defy single authorship, which can change the signature of a work into a political issue or statement and at the same time engage with direction or *Regie*.⁵⁸ Direction need not necessarily be performed by the singular person of a director, but can also be divided among several people in a shared responsibility (as is the case with theatre collectives such as She She Pop, Rimini Protokoll, tg STAN, Forced Entertainment, etc.).

⁵⁴. Sidiropoulou, p. 141.

⁵⁵. Chinoy & Cole, pp. 49–50.

⁵⁶. John Mazur, *A Comparative Study of the Use of the Crowd as Presented in the Works of the Duke of Sachsen-Meiningen, Konstantin Stanislavsky and Max Reinhardt* (Montana: Saint Ambrose College, University of Montana, 1967), <http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2867&context=etd> [accessed 13 March 2016]

⁵⁷. See Gerald Rabkin, 'Is There a Text on this Stage? Theatre/Authorship/Interpretation', *Performing Arts Journal*, 9 (1985), 142–159; Anthea Kraut, 'Whose Choreography? Josephine Baker and the Question of (Dance) Authorship', *Scholar and Feminist*, 6.1–2 (2007), http://sfoonline.barnard.edu/baker/kraut_01.htm [accessed 10 April 2016]; Sidiropoulou; Shepherd.

⁵⁸. See Scott Proudfit and Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva, *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Boenisch.

The director's book as control, cult, and capital

Authors are defined as those directors 'having developed a unique style, a trademark that characterizes their work'.⁵⁹ Their specific, recognisable style is individual and therefore strongly personal. Artistic vision merges with a person(al identity), with all the dangers of idolatry that entails. Directors can indeed become both manager and messiah. They lead a group of people, set up the *modus operandi* of a theatre company, buy and manage a theatre building, oversee the day-to-day organisation of the company by delegating tasks, drawing up schedules, and providing feedback. That means they also have to watch over the (economic) profitability of their organisation by getting other financial support and overseeing the sale of their theatre performances.

The director's book is likewise used as a means of imposing discipline. A striking evolution is how different directors, as their career progressed, started to compile a less rigid direction book. Stanislavski offers the best example. At the start of his career, he would record everything and dictate it to his actors, even to the smallest movements. The practice of recording every little detail in isolation, months before the rehearsals began, was crucial for shaping his vision and developing his poetics. However, as Stanislavski would become established and more confident as a director, he would allow more freedom to his actors. He would literally leave more open space in his director's book.

⁵⁹. Sidiropoulou, p. 1.

Directors not only control the produced *performance*, but also become producers of their *image*: 'they engineer their own artistic profile and manage its impression'.⁶⁰ The visionary director embodies a specific belief system and in this way, starts to direct his company and its work structure and space according to this way of thinking — that is why different directors also acquire a certain status of 'spiritual leader'. A director has a religious and mystical connotation, something that is only emphasised in the author's discourse. Artaud argues for a director to be an author, but at the same time also a priest-like figure, a creator, a shaman who recovers a lost spirituality in daily life and among the spectators. Various director gurus followed, including Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Eugenio Barba. Author-directors are often seen as the harbingers of (a) 'truth'. We see them, as mentioned above, as 'guardians' — of a dramatic text, of a theatre tradition, of a philosophy — surrounded by 'aura'.⁶¹ The director becomes the liberator of theatrical art, and the director's book forms his or her Bible.

Charles Shattuck compares director's book research with Bible study. Indeed, through director's book research we may find answers to questions surrounding (work of) the director. This becomes quite clear in the director's book research of the enigmatic work of Romeo Castellucci.⁶² Discourse plays an important role in creating the image of the director as a guru — both by the directors themselves and by the researchers who study them. In writing about directors, we find a lot of (projected) personality, which is reinforced by the study of director's books. This becomes very clear in the writing about Artaud and his

⁶⁰. Shepherd, p. 201.

⁶¹. Shepherd, pp. 89-92, 168-169; Jannarone, pp. 133-158; Chinoy 1976: 39-40.

⁶². ARCH, see Eleni Papalexiou, 'The Dramaturgies of the Gaze: Strategies of Vision and Optical Revelations in the Theatre of Romeo Castellucci and Societas Raffaello Sanzio', in *Theatre as Voyeurism* (New York: Springer, 2015), pp. 50-68; Joe Kelleher and Nicolas Ridout, *The Theatre of Societas Raffaello Sanzio* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007).

mad genius (or genius madness). Researchers describe the study of his director's books as descending into his thoughts through the study of his tormented drawings.

This idea seemingly contrasts the often-criticised financial instrumentality of the director. The director as an author does 'personal branding', ensures that s/he is very recognisable and therefore tradable. Academic research (unconsciously) encourages that capitalist movement. If the critical discourse about a director increases, directors become 'brand names with marketing potential', thus nourishing the 'industry'.⁶³ Director's books are eagerly sold, published, and exhibited. Throughout history (such as the famous dispute with Marilyn Monroe over the buying of Max Reinhardt's *Regiebücher*) as well as with contemporary directors (such as Jan Fabre, Robert Wilson, etc.) director's books become commodities. The value of these director's books, merely 'by-products' of creating a performance, increases due to the context of the performance and the director's (successful) career. At the same time, these sold and distributed director's books reinforce the director's image as the author of a performance. The director's book as economical product radically opposes the idea of theatre or performance as leaving no traces behind and thus being anti-capitalist.⁶⁴

⁶³. Dennis Kennedy, 'The Director, the Spectator and the Eiffel Tower', *Theatre Research International*, 30.01 (2005), 36–48 (p. 46).

⁶⁴. See Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993).

The director's book as genetic fiction

As theatre genetic research in general and of director's books in general strengthens the idea of a singular author or *Regisseur*, it also constructs an interpretation and conception of the director's figure. Director's books can be used to perform control, establish (a) cult(like) culture and generate capital. In combination with (theatre genetic) research, these potentialities can lead to the creation of a 'genetic fiction' — which forms another potentially problematic product of the marriage between director's books and theatre genetic research.

Patrice Pavis writes that director's books

reveal to us the intimate vision of its compiler, which is at the same time very valuable and somewhat misleading; indeed, one has the impression that the notation is too authoritarian, that it gives too precise a direction to the reading of the performance.⁶⁵

I want to argue that these director's books give a too precise direction to the reading of the author, the director. Grésillon, Mervant-Roux and Budor agree that by sharing their creative processes, artists can (re)construct the image of their artistry: 'Ils créent ou rejouent des "fictions génétiques"'.⁶⁶ Some directors are well aware of the after-life of their director's books. For example, Fabre corrects and censures certain genetic documents post-factum, creating an idealised image of both the

⁶⁵. Pavis, 'Reflections on the Notation', p. 116.

⁶⁶. Grésillon, Mervant-Roux, Budor, p. 18.

performance and the author. By making drawings and scale models after the performance, decorating rough sketches, destroying low-quality drawings, etc., Fabre guards the legacy of his own artistry. Various directors will make post-factum changes to their director's book before sharing it through sales, exhibition, archiving, or other means. Self-censorship is also an important strategy in manipulating one's own creative process. Fabre made hundreds of drawings for his early theatre trilogy (*Theatre written with a k is a tomcat*, *This is theatre as it was to be expected and foreseen*, and *The power of theatrical madness*) and yet he has saved only a hundred — out of quality control.⁶⁷

Within the director's book, there is a tension between private and public. Artist John A. Parks claims that we are invited through shared, private sketch- and notebooks to look through 'an unusually transparent window into a highly fertile, indefatigable, creative intelligence'. We are being witness to the way the mind of the artist crystallises and materialises. Although 'we can never fully know what goes on in the artist's head,' writes Parks, 'looking through his sketchbooks gets us very close indeed'.⁶⁸ But what if the artist knows that we are watching? The director can then take us by the hand and lead our eyes to what he or she wants us to see. This implies that the evoked images of both director and performance are inspired by the author of the director's book. The director remains the director of after-performances, of possible future performances, and of the performance in which s/he takes on a role and plays her/himself.

⁶⁷. Jan Fabre, *Interview with Jan Fabre and Miet Martens by Edith Cassiers, Frederik Le Roy and Luk Van den Dries* (Antwerp: unpublished, 2013), n.p.

⁶⁸. John A. Parks, 'A World In Motion: From Sketchbook to Sculpture', *Drawing*, Winter (2014), 88–93 (p. 93).

The director's book as copyright and canon(isation)

After fictionalising and sometimes sharing, director's books are most often archived. Archiving is strongly linked to the construction of the figure of the director. Dirk Van Hulle situates the rise of the tendency to 'save one's own scraps' (or genetic documents) in modernity, in a combination of increased literary awareness and the emphasis on authorship.⁶⁹ At the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, this urge to archive explodes, in a tandem with new archiving methods. Contemporary artists are more and more encouraged to present the creative process as a valuable form of knowledge production: an 'individual' form of research and knowledge.⁷⁰ More and more artists are entering into alliances with theatre and other scientists to unlock their creative process.⁷¹ Directors also consciously invest in archiving. They craft alliances during their lifetime to guarantee that their genetic traces (and thereby also the memory of their work and authorship) are being preserved: Perceval has a collaboration with Toneelhuis and Letterenhuis, Castellucci with the ARCH project, and at the beginning of 2018, Fabre donated a considerable part of his theatre drawings and

⁶⁹. Dirk Van Hulle, *De Kladbewaarders* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2007), pp. 26–27.

⁷⁰. Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in Contemporary Dance and Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁷¹. See for example Luk Van den Dries, *Corpus Jan Fabre. Observaties van een creatieproces* (Gent: Imschoot Uitgevers, 2006); Andrew Quick, Paula Court and Mary Gearhart, *The Wooster Group Work Book* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007); Marianne Van Kerkhoven and Anouk Nuyens, *Listen to the Bloody Machine: Creating Kris Verdonck's End* (Utrecht: Utrecht School of the Arts, 2012); Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Bojana Cvejić, *A Choreographer's Score* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2012 and 2014).

theatre photos to The Felix Archive, the Antwerp City Archives, in collaboration with the University of Antwerp, on the condition that this archive would be made available for future (academic) research.

The archiving of director's book is closely linked to copyright. Director's books were from the beginning used to legitimise the new, emerging role of the director. Martin Puchner emphasises the imbalance in the copyright of the playwright on the one hand, and the director on the other.⁷² When the director came up at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, s/he received no support in the form of copyright — in contrast to his or her literary colleague. Many directors took (and still take) the initiative to reinforce the idea of their authorship by sharing their staging plan, often in published, easily accessible, and affordable form.

The best example of this is the legal repository of the 'Catalogue des Relevés de Mise en Scène'. In Paris, since 1911, directors are expected to have their director's book included in the catalogue of the 'Association de la Régie Théâtrale', part of the 'Bibliothèque des Régisseurs de Théâtre'. Pavis compares it with registering a patent⁷³ and, indeed, it was a significant evolution in the development of the director that this institution was created to guard the design of the mise-en-scène. The purpose of this organisation is overview and preservation of all 'written mises-en-scènes' (or director's books) by preservation in their archives.⁷⁴ In this way, the organisation hopes to protect staging from plagiarism, and to provide re-enactments, publishers, and researchers with sufficient adequate material.⁷⁵

⁷². Martin Puchner, 'Drama and Performance: Toward a Theory of Adaptation', *Common Knowledge*, 17 (2011), 292-305 (p. 293).

⁷³. Pavis, 'Reflections on the Notation', p. 116.

⁷⁴. Daniel Gabriel Vierge, *Utilité de la conservation des mises en scène écrites* (AA.VV., 1956), p. 116.

⁷⁵. Vierge, pp. 118-119.

Nevertheless, such initiatives have consequences for the form and appearance of the director's book. For example, the director's books submitted must meet many criteria, both with regard to specific information, and with regard to communication. All 'mises-en-scènes' of A.R.T. rely, for example, on the dramatic text as a basis; other information is given in the form of annotations. The form is reminiscent of Reinhardt's *Regiebücher*: the dramatic text on one page, an open page on the other page for sketches and stage directions. Symbols and numbers in the text correspond to the relevant instructions. Every aspect of the theatre performance must be as clear as possible.⁷⁶

⁷⁶. Source image: Catalogue des Relevés de Mise en Scène, Association de la Régie Théâtrale, Bibliothèque des Régisseurs de Théâtre, Paris.



FIGURE 4

A 'mise en scène' for *L'Engrenage* (1932) by Denys Amiel, including practical diagrams as well as watercolour paintings.

The result is that these director's books lose their unique character. All these director's books look the same, and lose their authenticity, idiosyncrasy and (most importantly) role as part of the creative process. De Marinis describes it as follows: 'We find ourselves before a standardized, and even somewhat bureaucratic version of the Regiebuch, which becomes, however, more rigorously a posteriori'.⁷⁷ The director's book here, in short, has become a prompt book. Just like prompt books, these 'relevés de mise en scène' will be used to publicly legitimise the director's character and function (through publications such as the 'relevé de mise-en-scène' of Copeau's adaptation of *The Brothers Karamazov*).

Another important tool in the legitimisation of the artistic conception by the director is the use of the director's signature. The signature of a director is surprisingly often found in the director's book (in the first place a working document). Artaud signs his *dessins-écrits*, and Fabre and Wilson sign and date their theatre drawings. It is no coincidence that these three directors are also active in the visual arts. Reinhardt developed a monogram based on his name that he places on every *Regiebuch*. A signature usually has two functions: (self)identification, and giving approval or permission. A signature is seen as a manifestation of authorship. In the visual arts, a work is often signed by an artist, while his or her 'studio' or 'school' has done most of the work.⁷⁸ In this collaborative practice, the artist claims with his or her signature a (singular) authorship for the poetics, style, inspiration, and influence s/he has brought.

The archive decides which document is saved and which remain purely 'memorabilia'⁷⁹ or even 'detritus'.⁸⁰ It may not be a question *whether* director's books are saved, but *which* director's books are saved. While

we witness an increase in (theatre) genetic research and thus archived documents, what Rebecca Schneider called the 'logic of the archive' has been extensively criticised in recent years,⁸¹ as the archive is not a neutral body.⁸² In the book *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance* (2011), editor Glen McGillivray extensively discusses the relationship between archives, performance, and power. 'Human agency' decides what is archived, and what is ignored, or even hidden. Although 'made with the worthiest aims in mind', these decisions are 'explicitly or implicitly ideological'.⁸³ Every archive has a pattern of inclusion and exclusion. In authoritarian archives, women, LGBTQ +, people of colour, working class people or former colonial subjects are often absent.⁸⁴ Shepherd mentions 'cultural competence' as an undeniable feature of the director — perhaps even more than a specific form of skill. The director is the theatre woman but most often man who is 'culturally out front' and 'reproduce(s) the value system of a ruling group'.⁸⁵ In this way, a director is also an ideological construction, formed by the class values that s/he promotes.

← 79. Benjamin Hutchens, 'Techniques of Forgetting? Hypo-amnesic History and the An-archive', *SubStance* 113, 36.2 (2007): 37-54.

← 80. Matthew Reason, 'Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 19 (2003), 82-89.

81. See Rebecca Schneider, 'Archives. Performance Remains', *Performance Research*, 6.2 (2001): 100-108; Myriam Van Imschoot, 'Rests in Pieces. Scores, Notation Systems and the Trace in Dance', *Multitudes*, 21(2005), <http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Rests-in-pieces> [accessed 10 December 2015]; Diana Taylor, 'The Archive and the Repertoire', *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 16-33; Glen McGillivray, *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance* (Bern: Peter Lang Publishing, Incorporated, 2011); Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks, *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, Performance and the Persistence of Being* (London & New York: Routledge, 2012).

82. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

83. McGillivray, p. 13.

84. Ibidem.

85. Shepherd, p. 30.

77. De Marinis, p. 32.

78. Blaise Cronin, 'Collaboration in Art and in Science: Approaches to Attribution, Authorship, and Acknowledgment', *Information & Culture: A Journal of History*, 47.1 (2012): 18-37.

The archival document of the director's book determines how we remember (or imagine) the theatre performance (or in this case the creative process). The document surpasses the event. Director's books that were selected for preservation instruct research, education, and artistic practices. These director's books follow and (at the same time) form theatre history. The canon of theatre directors, the most important theatre-historical subjects, instructs (archaeological) research, and archive material dictates the canon — in a vicious circle. A clear example of this movement is the ignored figure of successful director, actor, costume designer, and suffragist activist Edith Craig in theatre history, while her brother Edward Gordon Craig was elevated to the canon.

The death of the director's book? A conclusion

After revisiting the definition and history of the director's book, as well as unravelling its intertwined relationship with theatre genetic research, we can conclude that theatre genetic research of *Regiebücher* plays a fundamental role in constructing the idea of the director. As preferred working instrument of the emerging director, these rehearsal documents have had a tremendous impact on the emancipation of this newly found theatrical 'author' in, amongst others, what is known as the struggle between text and *mise-en-scène*. The director's book played an important role in documentation and conservation, as well as obtaining protection or copyright for theatre directors.

It is not a coincidence that mostly early, modern theatre directors at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century would

plead the importance of studying the genetic documents of their predecessors. What Akakia-Viala has meant for the study of the 'metteur-en-scène' of nineteenth century French romantic theatre, Firmin Gémier has done for 'le metteur-du-jeu' of the passion plays of medieval theatre.⁸⁶ As a direct consequence, these director's books have sometimes a highly constructed and fictionalised form — as these directors are well aware of the possible impact of (genetic research of) these director's books.

Theatre genetic research has a powerful influence on the development of theatre in general, and direction in particular. Canonisation promises director's book research, and vice versa. Canonical Western theatre makers such as Meiningen, Garrick, Stanislavski, Appia, Craig, Reinhardt, Brook, Wilson, and many others, are more accessible for research, because they have available director's books in archives — unlike those of Madame Vestris, Sarah Bernhardt, and especially the many theatre makers who did not make theatre history, such as Edith Craig.

As direction as well as the figures that can perform this function are being renegotiated, theatre genetic research can play an important role in this discussion. For example, by performing a more critical investigation of genetic documents as well as articulating the different interactions that contribute to the creation of theatre, genetic studies can make an important correction to the historicising of theatre that is often constructed around the names of directors — without taking into account the formative contributions of actors, dancers, dramaturges, designers, and others. By doing what they do best — looking for lost traces, unveiling the creative process, and demystifying the makers — theatre genetic researchers can not only redefine the director's book, but direction and theatre history as well. •

⁸⁶. The French director recognized his 'predecessor' as he takes shape in the pages of the production plan of the Mons Passion Play (1501), which he labelled as 'livre de conduite du régisseur'.

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