

THE POST-APOCALYPTIC BODY
LENS:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE
PERCEPTUAL RE-IMAGINATION
OF THE BODY THROUGH
REPETITION

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Abstract

It has been established that the artistic and compositional strategies used in performances stage a specific way of looking for the theatrical spectator (Bleeker 2011). Repetition is frequently seen in current performances and has been debated in recent academic articles as a powerful strategy impacting the spectator through its capacity to renew, reiterate and create space for re-thinking. This thesis explores the perceptual processes taking place in the particular case of repetition and proposes the conceptual lens of the post-apocalyptic body (PAB) as means to establish a specific vantage point onto extreme theatrical encounters in which the body physically renegotiates its boundaries. The PAB lens affords to see the employed strategies on stage in such performances as a way for the body to renew its state and potentiality through the alteration of the spectator's perception. This makes the viewer a co-producer and, moreover, a co-imaginer of what the body could be beyond its state of limitations.

Through analyzing the works of Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre, this thesis establishes the power of bodily repetition and exhaustion as a way to transgress the boundaries of corporeality and metamorphose the *body image* (Schilder 2013). *While We Strive* by Arno Schuitemaker and *THE DOG DAYS ARE OVER* by Jan Martens allow to explore the dramaturgical tool of repetition and to see how the PAB lens can be put to work. Using concepts from theatre, philosophy and narratology helped envisage new perspectives on the transformative processes the moving repeating body has on perception. The PAB allowed in this aspect to conceive the theatrical encounter as a metamorphosis of the image and potential of the body through the perceptual emancipation of the spectator and to expose the relevance and potency of repetition as artistic strategy.

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1. Introduction

1.1 TOPIC

Human perception has been the topic of extensive research in the natural sciences as well as in the humanities. Theory of perception suggests that the way we perceive is influenced by cultural and historical contexts in our environment (culture, society, media, upbringing etc.). According to the phenomenological school of thought, meaning is grounded in our experience of the world, which through perception informs our way of thinking. For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the centrality of the body in perception and its sensory input are key in the way perception is said to function in a fluid renewed relation between body and environment. Performance artists and scholars have been fascinated with the question of vision and perception in theatre, and have created a rich palette of compositional strategies and concepts for analysis and creation. For example, scholar Maaïke Bleeker's book *Visuality in the Theatre* proposes a theoretical approach of perception analysis in theatre through the process of *focalization*. Pål Hansen introduced the compositional tool of *perceptual dramaturgy* "which has been developed through the application of a cognitive lens to the craft of dramaturgy" (Hansen 107). Dutch choreographer Arno Schuitemaker, for instance, has developed a choreographic vocabulary aiming at altering the perception of the body by using high intensity muscle tension movements and by pairing sound and movement for a new experience of movement through sound. As mentioned above, a myriad of events or changes can create shifts in the way we perceive. The scholarly and artistic explorations of the perception of the body point to a desire to translate the mutable nature of perception in their compositional strategies, performances and analytic tools. My interest lies in the way our perception of the body has shifted under the influence of the medialization of the body, technological innovations, diseases, wars etc. Performances seem to offer a crystallized view on the body and its shifting state by using different compositional strategies aiming to alter the spectator's experience of the body, thus creating a transformation in the way the body can be seen and experienced.

In Arno Schuitemaker's performance *I will Wait for You* three dancers develop a gradual trance of repetitive movements which melts into a one hour long ever-changing repetition. The innumerable reiteration of each movement leads the spectator into a trance together with the performer. Repetition after repetition, the dancers tire down, sweat appears and muscle tension rises. Their breathing deepens and with time, this endurance game is caught up by a creeping in exhaustion. The muscles start trembling, the movement gets heavier and larger, trajectories in space mark the dense effort of the body. It is then, when repetition perseveres into the movement and pushes through exhaustion, that the corporeal limit becomes visible and a new perspective of the body is opened. A perspective transcending the choreographic vision by augmenting it and by allowing us to see the body in its basic humanly futile struggle. Repetition lays bare the physical limits of the body on stage in its struggle to transcend its uncertain and dismantled perception, its seeming lack of matter and relevance. In the confrontation

between the staged body presented through physical repetition and the viewer, the spectator is confronted with a body negotiating the limit between life and death, striving for the unattainable and the impossible. Repetition accumulates layers of transition and yet reiterates the same. It is exactly there, that the paradox of repetition resides. As repetition in this state affords to get closer to the limit but also to re-negotiate the status of the body: its potential flourishes in the face of the imminent reality of its finitude and impossibility to escape from imposed destructive perspectives which question its potential and meaning. My claim is that repetition as a creative strategy, allows the body's perseverance towards metamorphosis through the involvement of the spectator's perception, who's imagination is engaged in an encounter that cannot be ignored. The experience of the body negotiating its physical boundaries in the quest of renegotiating physical and perceptual limits, overwrites the spectator's "normal" perception of the body.

1.1.1. Perceptual change through repetition

Perception here is seen from a phenomenological point of view, as a process of meanings through bodily experience, which informs the experience of the viewer through physiological as well as psychological influences. Seeing movement has been researched and theorized to affect us corporeally and mentally (Foster 2010), (Martin 1939), (Gallese and Goldman 1998) etc.). Embodied experience of movement internalizes both corporeal and mental processes of perception, which influence how meaning is shaped. Intense physicality such as in *I Will Wait for you*, affects the spectator in its trance-like reiteration of seemingly the same movement. The unusual usage of movement creates a fragmented thread of reiterations, which activates the spectator in constructing a new vocabulary of looking. To be more precise, the construction of what is seen demands a co-created way of seeing which drives the perceptual shift in the way the body is seen. As Bleeker writes, Johnathan Crary and John Martin discuss perception not only in terms of what is seen and who is seeing, but also what is meant to be seen (Bleeker 175). In this sense, the way the repetitive movement of the staged body affects perceptually the spectator is also impacted by the dramaturgical strategies in place. However, this does not occur on a level of meaning formation, but rather on the level of affect, which impacts the ways of looking and perceiving. Repetition is the central artistic strategy this thesis will explore, as it strikes as a highly potent tool for re-thinking and involves many intriguing phenomena linked to the process of return in perception.

In this thesis, I propose to look at the body of the performer as a trigger for perceptual change and thus a re-invention of the body through the spectator's perception. It is my proposition that the repetition of movement and the performer's exhaustion trigger the imagination of the spectator to re-imagine what the body could be, thus becoming an active co-creator of the bodily transformation through unconscious perceptual processes. This perceptual change resides in the shift between seeing the body as one-dimensional in the sense of presence and agency, and through the experience of repetition discovering its plurality and potentiality. A multiple body of not only flesh and unsurmountable physical limitations but also of potential in its ways to defy them through reiterating them seeking engagement of the

spectator. The body of the performer is thus assigned the power to affect perception through repetition, evoking a multiplicity of phenomena which amount to a change in experience and perception of the spectator. Repetition enables the “process of return” and acts as mediator between memory and experience (Davis & Meerzon 67), thus reconsidering of the dismantled body and questioning again its nature and potential. With each movement, the dancers in *I will Wait for you*, guide the attention towards a re-newel of the experience and overlap of the visual which triggers us to return again and again to the experience.

Although repetition is at the center of the analysis, exhaustion will also be looked at as part of the physical strategy as I consider it inseparable when talking of the body. Exhaustion naturally develops as an effect from movement repetition and renders the theatrical encounter intense and confronting. As I will unpack later on, exhaustion plays an important role in the potentiality of the body and its way to metamorphosis.

1.1.2. The field of repetition

Repetition is currently debated in the academic research field as intriguing artistic strategy. Repetition offers the opportunity to look again, to re-consider and re-experience. In the editorial of *On Repetition (Performance Research Journal)* Erini Kartsaki and Theron Schmidt write: “In our attempt to go back, we mark both the impossibility of return, but also the potential of remains. Performance disappears, yet it ‘persists in recurrence, it remains unresolved, haunting our memories, documents and critical frameworks’ (Heathfield 2000: 106). It remains, ‘but remains differently’ (Schneider 2001: 106)” (1). In this issue dedicated to repetition, this introduction sets the stage for the rich potential and the treasure one can find in repetition as artistic strategy. The impossibility and persistent recurrence mark a seemingly closed cycle, which nevertheless opens new possibilities each time one walks its path. Looking at repetition as a practice which can offer re-newel, this issue explores several approaches and case studies. Diving into a few of its article will uncover the current field surrounding repetition and its effects, thus contextualizing it in artistic practices as well as in scholarly analysis.

In Erini Kartsaki’s article, repetition is explored as trigger for “engagement” in spectatorship in relation to desire through Marco Berrettini’s piece of *iFeel2*. Kartsaki proposes that repetition “provoke[s] a particular type of engagement [...] which can be understood as a perpetual process of searching for satisfaction” (126). This positioning of the spectator evokes the process involved in desire and the role of repetition as the generator of the drive. The repetition of a circular path is transposed to the spectator’s experience as the work’s construction is based on repetitive sequence of steps with forces the viewer to go back to what is shown. Kartsaki develops a view on the construction of the piece as building towards “something yet to come” linked to desire and the inevitability of never reaching it. Regarding spectatorship, this cyclic repetition evokes the state of constant awaiting and expectation. As I propose in this thesis, this state is a result of multiple repetitions accumulating, triggering the spectator’s

imagination to co-create what is not there. Her article “offer[s] an account of the spatial and temporal impossibility developed through repetition. A search for desire’s impossible satisfaction is experienced both in terms of space [...] and time” (Kartsaki 129). This unreachable state of satisfaction Kartsaki evokes unearths one of repetition’s core phenomena related to corporeal movement. It allows for a space to be created between what is seen and what could be seen, and it is through the reiteration of the impossibility of reaching the state of satisfaction that I suggest the spectator is engaged in its co-imagination. Through this process the body can strive towards reaching its potentiality. In their article *Always Translating*, Mari Paterson and Rajni Shah, also evoke the idea of potential related to the aesthetic in the context of the repetitious nature of the work (77). In their conversation about repetition and its effects, Paterson and Shah describe repetition as a strategy, which creates frustration and boredom in the face of expectations (related with the function of the narrative in her works) and thus a needed re-positioning of the spectator towards their way of looking at the work. It also seems to create a specific frame of experiencing the work by defying expectations through repetition and reaching a potential beyond the state boredom, which they theorize as “a moment of recognition of the experience of this burgeoning event with other people [...] into an experience that is full of potential.” (Paterson & Shah 78).

In her article *Returning to the Show*, Katerina Paramana also draws attention to the spectator as participant and agent in the “collective of individuals” (Paramana 117), pointing towards a collective experience of rethinking and resituating. In her discussion of Jerome Bel’s performance *The Show Must Go On*, Paramana conceives the work as an economy embracing different systems of relations accumulating to a “production of the social” (117): “I investigate the role of repetition in sociality produced by the work through the economy of relations it creates within itself” (Paramana 117). For her, Bel exposes the functioning of the theatre and lays bare the construction between spectatorship, expectations and representation. Her approach to repetition proposes the theatrical space as generative or rearticulating the affect from works that “have produced certain effects on our thinking and feeling not only about art, but about the world, how we relate to it and to others.” (Paramana 116). Paramana defines the act of repetition as an act of rethinking which inscribes itself in a larger introspection about our self in relation to the surrounding world. She establishes the link between the lingering of the affect of a work on the spectator, which can be extrapolated to a sense of awareness and reconsideration of our existence as a whole. This emphasizes her belief that the theatrical encounter holds a “potential for change outside of the theatre walls.” (Paramana 117). Repetition and the power of the theatrical encounter are considered as influences on rethinking on a larger scale, which points to their potential for change not only during a performance, but on the Self. Repetition has been explored by Jerri Daboo, as a tool for altering or gaining awareness of the self (transformation of the *bodymind*) as well as a pattern of learning and functioning underlying our everyday activities. This renders alteration through repetition into an organic process in the sense that it mimics cognitive and physiological pathways built themselves

through repetition. Daboo examines repetition in ritual performance in Buddhism and more specifically in ritual performance through “repeated embodied acts in ritual performance” (12), pointing out the characteristics and potential of repetition in its relation to the formation of the self and the possibility to alter one’s experience of the bodymind through repetitive embodied acts. This article draws attention to the paradox residing in repetition as a strategy to “generate change” through the reiteration of the same act (12). Daboo explores the potential of transformation in the context of ritual. The perceptual shift described occurs on the level of awareness of the self and the transition to a non-self (in Buddhist practices) of the bodymind of the practitioner or performer/actor. The embodied practice through repetition affects the sense of self of the doer in Daboo’s case studies. Repetition is thus established as a source of paradoxical shift of perception and thus a possible transformation in the way one can sense and think of the self through the practice of embodied acts. Following this logic, could repetition affect the witness as well? Imagination and visualization play an important role in the rituals Daboo describes, could they also constitute a way for an observer of the embodied act to also experience the perceptual shift of the self? My proposition in this thesis concerns the mechanisms involved in seeing a body undergoing changes through repetition and the phenomena that afford for a spectator to experience the perceptual shift Daboo evokes (beyond the Buddhism practices). It consist in experiencing bodily and mentally the changes occurring through repetition on a physical level and on a metaphysical one (associations with the images of the body, challenging own preconceptions about the body). Daboo’s idea of the impermanence of the self casts a new perspective on how one can look at the bodymind as an ever changing entity of renewal through repetition in the theatrical encounter. Thus, the position of the spectator becomes relevant in its relation to a shared experience between the performer in transition and the spectator as co-creator of this transformation. Similarly, in her article on the experience of anxiety as a medium in the spectator’s encounter in Tim Shaw’s installations, Adrian Kear proposes that the spectator’s co-presence puts him or her in closeness with the installations through their own presence in the theatrical encounter. He underlines that the ““medium does not lie between sender and receiver ; it includes and constitutes them’ (Mitchell 2006:204)” (Kear 62). The spectator is thus a fundamental constitutive part of the encounter and through his or her presence co-creates the theatrical experience built on the constructions in place. This relates to the way I see the spectator’s role in this thesis, which emphasizes strongly the role of the spectator as co-creator of the encounter and mainly as co-imaginor of the body on stage. Repetition in Shaw’s works takes place in the re-enaction of the staged scene through the spectator’s encounter with them.

Tim Etchells introduces the idea of repetition and return on the compositional level of making performances and as a tool to re-create elements from camera recordings and scores. Re-living repetition seems to afford new possibilities of composition in performance making which is characteristic to the medium used (camera, scores) and the modalities of repetition. Repetition can afford different pathways

towards reliving and re-creating a work from scores and recordings. Thus, it represents a potent strategy which diversifies the compositional possibilities inside of a work.

Repetition as an artistic strategy is often referred to in this thesis as affording phenomena which impact the spectator's perception. Those phenomena as I have unpacked above include effects on our temporal, spatial, compositional, physical perception and can influence the mental and thought processes thus modifying the awareness of the spectator, etc. The exploration of repetition's effect on spectatorship in the case studies *While We Strive* and *THE DOG DAYS ARE OVER*, focuses on the perceptual shift of the body and the mental effects repetition creates for the spectator. Looking at the example of *I will wait for you* through the lens I propose, allows to look at the theatrical encounter as an opportunity for redefinition for the performing body (researching its potential for change and its state) through the artistic strategy of repetition. In the confrontation with a constantly repeating movements body, sweating and losing control over precision, this lens affords to focus on the spectator as an engaged co-imaginative entity. To look at this phenomenon, I propose a focus on the shifts in perception in spectatorship triggered by repetition in performances.

1.2 THE POST-APOCALYPTIC BODY LENS

To investigate and look at the perceptual phenomena occurring in the theatrical encounter evoked previously, I propose the notion of the post-apocalyptic body (PAB) as a conceptual lens. It forms a tool and a perspective, which can be used to look at the body in performance art as perpetually seeking change and elaborating different structures to position the seer (repetition phenomena linked to introspection, awareness of the self, experiencing and rethinking the body differently through being engaged with co-presence and co-creation) and evoke a new experience of the body's potential. This lens is conceived as a way to analyze spectatorship phenomena related to the usage of repetition in physical performances.

By looking at the extreme theatrical encounter as a productive schema for the re-invention of the body the PAB positions the spectator as a vital entity through which the performing body can be perceived differently from its seemingly paralyzed state. This encounter, such as the one in *I Will Wait for You*, involves a performing body in constant repetition of movement and engages the spectator through the striated phenomena of repetition such as the accumulation of images, the trigger of awaiting, reliving the encounter etc. The latter offers a plurality of experiences of the staged body and a return to expectations and preconception about its potential. The PAB lens opens a productive space of questioning the theatrical encounter by placing the spectator in the role of the receiver of stimuli which are transformed by his/her perception into a new version of the body going beyond the present image. Re-imagination take place in the paradoxical power of repetition through which novelty is generated through endless reiteration.

In *I will wait for you*, the three bodies of the dancers enter in an extreme trance of intense physical repetition, which engages the spectator in a magnetic attraction to the repetitive movements and the sweating tired bodies. The audience perception is characteristic of a radical encounter with the visceral corporeality of the body on the edge between re-defining the boundaries of possibility and re-negotiating its corporeal limits. The PAB allows for an analysis of the experience of the audience and the untangling of the phenomena accumulated through the perceptual shift occurring while witnessing physical repetition. My claim is that this lens will allow better seizing and theorizing the production of a third entity between the exhausted performing body and the spectator. A third metaphysical entity, which I propose to be the co-imagined renewed body, between the repetition of the physical exhaustion of the performer and the perceptual shift of the spectator.

1.4 WHY THIS NOTION?

The post-apocalyptic nature of the lens originates from the state of the body after the Second World War (see [Origin and Definition](#)) and the way it impacted how we conceive the body not only in post-war art movements but rather how we can reconstruct the integrity of the body after its mistreatment has transgressed all limits of the imaginable. The final apocalypse of the body being the extermination camps, the question is still presently posed if the body can still matter in any way after this violent disfigurement. The Theatre of Absurd embarked on this exploration and is considered in this thesis as a key inspiration and carrier of the unique atmosphere constitutive of the lens I propose.

My claim is that the notion of the PAB as a lens triggers new questions and new ways of thinking of the body through the re-experience of its limitations and their repetition leading towards the inevitable exhaustion. I think that introducing a body-lens is necessary to take a starting point in a world in which meaning has been lost, and instead of being rebuilt or found, it is replaced by the numbing of the awareness/consciousness of the fact that we are in a crisis of meaning, a crisis of being. The body has been denied as a carrier of meaning in the post-dramatic paradigm, but is in the midst of elaborating a new of being of relevance for its own reconstruction as entity of transformation. My claim is that through the PAB lens we can see how the body is rebuilt through specific uses (see [Repetition as a tool to re-imagine](#)) of repetition, which evokes new perceptual experiences, creating urgency around the impossibility to continue bathing in ignorance and comfortable passivity. Through the lens of the PAB, I want to explore the possibility of meaning and transcendence of the body and specifically look at spectatorship in performances that use repetition. I propose that to attain this goal, the body has developed strategies, which involve the co-creation of an imaginary vocabulary in the encounter between performer and spectator in order to seek re-definition in the imagination of the beholder.

The PAB lens can be applied to spectatorship by looking at the staged body as an essentially post-apocalyptic one, hence a body seeking re-definition by nature and transcending its limitations via the strategy of repetition. Thinking in terms of an encounter between the spectators confronted with a post-

apocalyptic body emphasizes the exchange between the two entities and their roles in a shared experience of a newly formed body. This lens looks at the spectator as the core entity through which the performing body can renew itself, by creating a shift in the perception of the body and introspection of the self for the spectator. The latter is created by reiterating the extreme state of the body, which could amount to an excess of associations for the spectator, which allows him/her to see through the burden, and accumulated history of how the body has been seen. To be more precise, in the extreme encounter with a physically extreme body on stage, in the incessant repetition of movement reaching exhaustion, the spectator accesses associations with the emotional and physical impact he/she receives. This state in which the spectator is put point to the postwar body as a thick layer of accumulated perspectives on the suffering and paralyzed body throughout the violence it has lived in human history. Certain performances evoke the state of the post-apocalyptic body through the staging of a body in ferocious repetition of suffering which creates a self-reflection in the spectator as it points to a larger state of the body, which is co-created by those who see it. Therefore, the PAB as a conceptual lens becomes necessary as a tool distilling the elements of performances which evoke this state and raise the awareness of the spectator in his/her role in the co-creation of the body and thus opportunity for change.

Authors such as Paul Valery, Bojana Kunst and many others have explored the notion of a body as a tool of analysis and reflection. Valery's theory of the body unfolds in his theory of the Three-bodies. "He distinguishes not only the felt body from the physical body but the *seen* body from both." (Sheets-Johnstone 86). Valery proposes that in our thoughts we have three bodies: a kinesthetic body, a body seen by the others and a scientific body. First it is *my body*, the felt body through movement and proprioception, then the body seen by others and the third body is the one we know from science and dissections, the one whose mechanisms and organs we can know only through taking them apart. The Three-bodies described by Valery indicate different functioning relations between the body (felt, seen, scientific) and knowledge and experience of the world. The characteristics of each body afford different ways of relating to larger systems (such as society, kinesthetic and tactile sense, physiology), thus allowing to explore them through the specific lens of the kind of body. In a similar way, the PAB also affords the exploration of perception, knowledge and imagination. In his essay *Some Simple Reflections on the Body*, Valery also adds the *Fourth body* which is distinct than the other three. It "is at once a Real body and an Imaginary body - a body of possibility" (The Three Body Problem, Popova). It seems to hold a paradoxical potential beyond the intelligible: "the knowledge acquired by means of the intellect is a product of what this Fourth body *is not*. Everything that is, masks for us, necessarily and irrevocably, *something that may be...*" (Valery 234). This last body seems to contain contradictions, but also the potential to complete the Three-bodies through the nonexistent and the intangible. To be more precise, if one was to think of what is not intelligible, the Fourth body goes beyond the discrete experiences the other three bodies give and incarnates an elusive approach to the body which can reveal another way to inhabit our reality by relating to something outside of the body. The PAB embodies a functional logic,

not in relation to the intelligible but in relation to the invisible and imaginary. Through this lens, the staged body explores the perceptual phenomena of repetition, which characterizes its specific relation to the invisible and the imaginary in its interaction with the spectator. The invisible is seen through repetition and developed through accumulation of relations with an entity beyond the physical body: an imaginary construction of the body of what it could be and it could do.

Similarly to the *Fourth body*, Kunst forges the *impossible body* as a trigger entity facilitating striated questioning of how we see and perform the body. “The impossible body is one of the manifestations of the unstable field, employed to denote the basic longing that functions as a basis for the production of bodily images, the mode of body's visibility, its representation and performing.” (The Impossible Body, Kunst). The impossible body seems to evoke an ideal body that can be never reached; it is the longing for a limitless body, which for Kunst is able to function through the artificial. The paradox of the impossible body resides in its affordance for “new forms and possibilities of representation” (Kunst) of a body that cannot be without the artificial, hence a body that cannot exist. This evokes the idea of the potential in the nonexistent as source for production of new images and a new way of conceiving the body. This relates to the triggered imagination of the spectator stemming from the exhaustion of possibles and consequently the production of new images, I develop in [Chapter II](#). Kunst’s exploration is focused on the role of the artificial “in our understanding of the physical”. This body-concept offers the opportunity to create a new language to understand the body today through an ideal that is out of reach. Similarly, the PAB affords to explore the body through a process of re-imagination, hence a nonexistent metaphysical entity which creates a new way to experience the body perceptually.

These body concepts appear to become productive in their multiplicity and elusiveness, which afford a pluralistic approach onto knowledge and the vision of the body. This poetic and metaphysical opened nature of the body presumes the constant juxtaposition of different lenses and influences on the body, which relates to the way the PAB lens portrays and seeks the renewal of the body. In other words, it can afford the encompassing of the functioning of perception as internal system and take into account its exterior influencing factors such as physical and material stimuli, cultural and historical conditioning, political apparatuses etc. This thesis will act as a first sketch on their interpenetrating in the case of repetition and does not impose itself as an exhaustive or chronological historical overview, nor a fully developed theory. It is a process in the midst of a delicate encounter with this fragile body and the friction between a desire to grasp it fully and at the same time the impossibility to do so.

1.5 METHOD

My main research question focuses on how the conceptual lens of the post-apocalyptic body can be productive to unravel the phenomena of repetition in audience address and provide critical insights on its workings. In order to answer this, I will first explore how we can define the post-apocalyptic body. [Chapter I](#) traces the genealogy of the PAB in an effort to define its nature and functioning in relation to

repetition. Through examples such as the shift in the way we perceive the body after Second World War and how it has been represented in Beckett's theatre of Absurd, I attempt to form a web of references resonating with the matter of the PAB lens. These elements will help to create a grounding of the term in theatrical and performance art traditions and will establish a sense of the atmosphere or tone surrounding the PAB lens. Also contributing on how repetition functions in relation to the cases study and its effect on spectatorship.

It becomes pertinent to question how the usage of physical repetition creates new perceptual/sensorial vocabularies. To investigate this I will explore the post-dramatic experimentation in the performances of Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre as two key makers, who have innovated the physical re-negotiation with boundaries in order to attain metamorphosis ([chapter II](#)). Through their strategies, I will investigate the potential of extreme physical vocabularies which amount to change in a political and social critique. I will compile a toolbox, which will help build the theoretical framework around the lens of the PAB and allow me to pinpoint the perceptual protocols of the theatrical encounter involved with repetition. To this end, I will explore the potential binding between physical exhaustion and repetition as a shift in perception through re-imagination. I will use Deleuze's theory on exhaustion and Foucault's notion of *repeatable materiality* to contextualize the shift in the encounter between the exhausted body and the spectator, to unearth the perceptual effects of repetition on perception. Furthermore, the narrative device of ellipsis will help hypothesize the trigger for the spectator to co-produce and re-actualize the performance through filling the blanks in the perpetual repetition. This articulation of the vocabularies at play in the occurring perceptual shift will help me argue for the potential of repetition as a tool for re-imagination and its consequence of exhaustion as powerful phenomena allowing the body to reach its *potentiality*. In a second part, I will map out the encounter seen through the lens of the PAB with an eye to its possible usage in the analysis of the case studies. To this end, I will explore Bleeker's concept of *focalization* with respect to the performer and spectator as main entities in the encounter and their interrelations in meaning making processes and vantage points perception-wise.

In [chapter III](#), will use two case studies of current performances from makers Arno Schuitemaker and Jan Martens in order to explore repetition through the PAB lens. This will contribute to the exploration of the PAB lens as an analytical tool, which will allow me to look in-depth into the intricate relation between performing body and spectator and how repetition positions the audience through different phenomena. To this end, I will use de Marinis perspective on spectatorship, thus initiating the spectator as a co-producer and actualization agent of the performance content. Furthermore, Bleeker's concept of *focalization* will prove valuable in articulating the perceptual effects of the performative elements of each performance in helping identify the link between the dramaturgy of the performance and the possible mechanisms amounting to a shift in the spectator's perception. Her theory on spectatorship and more specifically on the *seer* will allow me to frame the audience's perception as culturally conditioned, and will emphasize the active role of the spectator in the metaphysical re-imagination of the body.

Through my case studies, I will look at what physical and perceptual phenomena are occurring through the usage of repetition and their dramaturgical choices in the positioning of the spectator. In the [Discussion](#), I will explore how does the desire for redefinition of the body and “emancipation” of perception of the PAB translate in a social everyday scope and expand further on how it could be instrumentalized.

The methodology of research for the introduction and chapters was two-fold: First, mapping out the field of repetition and the PAB lens and then pinpoint their characteristics and workings. Building a theoretical framework around the PAB lens in order to situate it in scholarly discourses and performance art traditions, will allow me to explore different discourses around the body and to relate them to the PAB. The exploration of Bausch and Fabre’s usage of repetition and exhaustion will provide me with different analysis related to the effects of these strategies and how they have been utilized to different ends. This will help me establish the importance of repetition both in the practical and in the theoretical field surrounding them. Secondly, to focus on the compositional means and physicality of the pieces in their role as triggers of perceptual negotiations, this thesis will use the format of a dramaturgical analysis. The main aim of this exploration will be to see how the usage of repetition in the pieces shapes the audience’s perception and creates a potential for transformation in the way the body is seen. In this sense, dramaturgical decisions will be questioned in their potential to influence the audience. In this way, as de Marinis explains, the spectator is put in two different roles: in an active role “referring to the various receptive operations/actions that an audience carries out: perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorization, emotive and intellectual response, etc. (see De Marinis 1983, 1984), and a passive one seeing “the audience as a dramaturgical object”. Working on a dramaturgical analysis from this point of view, we can build on de Marinis’ view, in order to uncover the mechanism binding both “active” and “passive” roles into a circuit. Looking at the audience as a dramaturgical object for the actions of the performers and their receptive operations as one interpenetrating loop, the PAB conceives the seer as a co-creator, the *other* through which the body-seen seeks metamorphosis and renewal. Considering this, the performer’s actions can be seen as triggering different receptive responses through building new vocabularies of perception. From there on, the role of the spectator is not limited to an isolated response as an end of the process, but rather participates in a combinatorial occurrence between emitted vocabularies and active reception in order to generate something new. As a consequence of the specific ways a performance stages vision, the audience acquires new tools of looking and co-creates in its role as receptor and emitter of perception. This dramaturgy of perception is metaphorically seen in this thesis as the engine of co-imagination between what is on stage and what vocabularies and positioning are given to the spectator.

I will make a dramaturgical analysis of two dance performances, which have used repetition aiming to put to work the lens of the PAB in order to articulate its functionality and pinpoint further the co-creation of a newly re-imagined body. Drawing on the theories related to perception, repetition and exhaustion

in the second chapter, will help me forge the PAB lens as a tool and try to apply it in the analysis. I think that performances offer a crystallization of such strategies and an opportunity to unravel how the PAB lens unpacks the workings of repetition in spectatorship.

My overall hermeneutic approach will aim for the formation of knowledge based on my subjective interpretation of perceptual and performative phenomena as well the usage of conceptual and analytical tools. Speculating around the perceptual implications on the way we perceive the body in the encounter of a body in repetitive physical exhaustion, opens ways to think of the body in repetition as a possible trigger of change. Repetition effects will be looked at potent strategies, which engage the spectator in co-creative looking.

1.6 SCOPE

The scope of this thesis englobes a first attempt of the mapping of the conceptual lens of the PAB in a suggestive way rather than a conclusive one. It strives to focus on repetition and the potential of the body to matter, as well as its relevance in a broader context beyond the theatrical encounter. This thesis does not attempt to create a chronological or exhaustive genealogy of repetition, but rather aims to map out the first grasp around the proposed conceptual lens and its potential to unravel repetition as a strategy and the phenomena emerging from its effects on spectatorship. It is set out to open numerous possible pathways for further investigation, interrogating the body in the scope of theory of perception and spectatorship analysis.

1.7 RELEVANCE

A broader interest around the PAB lens concerns its potential not only as a conceptual lens in performing arts but also how we perceive the body outside of the theatre. By drawing from Althusser, Barthes, Foucault and Deleuze theories to expand the underlying vision of the PAB, this thesis considers the body as a powerful tool for the creation of radical encounters of re-thinking the global. Thus arriving to my third sub question which strives to expand the PAB outreach and questions how do findings from current dance performances allow the concept of the PAB to be a critical tool to look at society at large ([Discussion](#))? In this way, the research for this thesis allows to see the PAB lens as a flexible entity which can be applied in theatrical and social contexts and also emphasizes the political potential of repetition and its transformative power related to perception. Concentrating on the potential of the body as an entity with the capacity for change beyond the theatrical encounter is relevant in the context of our heavily mediatized and technologized society and the perpetual shocks it produces on the body and the psyche (Buck Moors). Repetition in this context allows for a redefinition of the relationship developed in the theatrical encounter.

1.8 POTENTIAL

Furthermore, the PAB lens could work against the alienating effect of ideological apparatuses in altering the human being of the modern world (Buck-Moors) and attempt to re-sensibilize the body out of the numbness it is protecting itself with. The notion of *second consciousness* seems to be constitutive to partially define this disembodied protection, being the result of the “identification with an image of the body, divorced from the sensory vulnerability of the body felt from the inside, [...] against the shocks that make up modern life.” (Bleeker 143). This can be seen as a reaction to an apocalypse: “To protect itself against constant bombardment of shocks, the ego employs consciousness as a shield, blocking the openness of the synaesthetic system of the body, thereby isolating present consciousness from past memory.” (Bleeker 143-4). This disjunction in the forgetfulness of our embodied self in the technologized world relates to how Junger sees “modern life [as] a mirror that reflects back an image of the body that alters our awareness of ourselves as embodied beings.” (Bleeker 143). In the effort to stir this paralysis of disembodiment, the PAB lens could be seen as the materialization of the antithesis of this reflection. This modern body is described as “a virtual body [which] can endure the shock of modernity without pain” (143). Challenging the idea of “enduring the shocks”, the PAB creates a perspective which seeks to break the illusion of the virtual body and unleash the real pain and vulnerability as a strategy to come back to our bodies and subvert the disjunction. In this sense, repetition re-contextualizes the body in a visceral context of an embodied struggle for perseverance through pain, amounting to a re-birth of the body uniting the image of the body and “ourselves as embodied beings”. In the caesura between how we perceive the body and what is its real state and potential today, the question of *Can the body still matter?* is more and more pressing. However, perhaps the question should be *how* can it still matter or signify anything in this disembodiment, numbness and oversaturation? By re-searching the protocols of looking and the triggers of new visual responses through the PAB lens, I propose that the body in repetition pushes us to see it anew.

2. Chapter I: Genealogy of the post-apocalyptic body

2.1 Origin and definition

2.1.1 World War Two

Every *body* carries its history, accumulated experiences, knowledge, and memories. The final apocalypse suffered by the body was World War Two (WW2) and it has changed every body since. WW2 embodied the unimaginable, the unforgettable, the unthinkable. Imprisonment, starvation, deportation, concentration camps, extermination, stacks of skeleton-like bodies rolling into common graves. Beyond the inexistent limits, this excess of extreme monstrosity on the body leaves a mark not only in our History but also on our way to feel, apprehend and perceive the Body after it has transgressed every possible

human limit. The prism of this trauma keeps on influencing the construction of what a body is and could be in our perception and thoughts. The physical and psychical experience in the death-camps and its documentation, proliferation, existence created an unmeasurable shift in our way to see bodies as corpses, and altered our ability to distinguish between a body and a person. A body voided from its personality, uniqueness, reduced to its sticking bones. I claim that this shift impacts the way one can relate to the *other*, and to the *Self*. According to Schilder's rhizomatic definition of the *body-image* "one's body-image extends itself to any place any particle of one's body has reached across space and across time." (quote by Lepecki 50). Incarnating the ferocious transgression of what is (to be) human and what is beyond that, has left a mark and amounts to an accumulation onto the body-image we have of the body, where the body has been, what it has experienced, as an anatomical and psychic entity – the postwar body.

After the war, several artistic movements such as Theatre de l'Absurde, started exploring the senselessness of this post-apocalyptic body by experimenting with different triggers leading to its modified perception; the body in its post-saturation, post-limits, post-signification. Seeing the body as an entity with the potential to reinvent itself by creating different ways of being seen, artists like Samuel Beckett, and later on Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre created a multitude of theatre plays and performances exploring the potential of this postwar body. Beckett's vision of the body contributes to an atmospherically formative level of the idea of the post-apocalyptic body. It marries the post-war body with the loss of sense and direction of Humanity. I propose that this sets the stage for a particular way of looking at the body as a survival entity thrown into the world, which struggles to exist and involves the *other* as a way to continue to become. The PAB forms a lens, a way of looking at the body today in physical performances using repetition, which utilizes the postwar body as a background against which the perception of spectators is altered in unique ways. The body carrying an accumulation of post-war reactions, actions, contestations, found a way to re-search itself in Beckett's theatre. By seeking metamorphosis as a remedy for its paralysis and sudden atemporal suspension, its loss of meaning and signification, the post-apocalyptic lens in his theatre questions what is still left of it after its apocalypse. In the midst of the final exhaustion of everything that has ever existed, the human body in Beckett's plays is presented as a survival wreckage from a final natural disaster – Humanity. The body is dismantled in the aftermath of a sensorial excess and brutal brainwashing of the body through the hygiene of ignorance. The post-apocalyptic appears in the exhaustion of the possibles, the potentially destroyed realities and impossible futures. In *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, the material and physical exhaustion are overarched by the exhaustion of the imagination and the overall waiting and uneventfulness. *Endgame*'s first line is: "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" (Beckett 93). There is nothing more, nothing could ever happen, nothing ever was, is and will be beyond the current (meta) physical paralysis. The incapacity to go further and break free from the passivity predominates Beckett's plays. The senseless repetition and questioning the lack and emptiness in the world of *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* establish a specific way of exhausting all possibles and

by that creating the impossible in our imaginations. This constitutes a new perspective and understanding of this world through its transcendence and endless triggering of the impossible through exhaustion and repetition. It resides in the long dialogues conveying the exhaustion of waiting or the absence of any possible action which stimulate the imagination of what the characters relentlessly evoke (God, eating, objects etc). As I argue, the post-apocalyptic as a dimension attributed to the body originates from this Beckettian world and can be also seen in the accumulation of violence, brutality and exhaustion of the body today. Repetition of all these exhausted spectra, creates possibilities through triggering the imagination of the spectator, and the impossible becomes possible. Through this shared impossible between its creation from the characters and its co-imagination from the spectators, the impossible resides a reference and create new possibilities of understanding the staged body and its experiences. The post-apocalyptic body is fighting the pathos of auto-negation and passivity through strategies, which strive for the creation of new imaginary vocabularies. I see these phenomena as the post-apocalyptic body's attempts to seize its own cataclysm and resist being overwhelmed and controlled by it. Employing diverse compositional and perceptual strategies the PAB breaks the Beckettian *huis-clos* by enabling the spectators to re-imagine and re-think its state.

In its post-catastrophic state, the body in Beckett's theatre seems to be re-exploring its relations to movement, space, objects, etc. The perception of the body as Self-less corpse, as coping mechanism for the atrocities in WW2 is being problematized on stage by a confrontation which cannot be ignored. This objectification of the body and paradoxical disjunction of selfless bodies, gives space to explore how to relate to the *other*. Thus, seeing "the body as object of perception" (McMullan 355) constitutes a strategy to surpass the material binding to what the body can, and access a metaphysical space based on perceptual redefinitions.

2.2 Nature and functioning of the PAB

In Postdramatic Theatre, Lehmann writes about *physicality* and the body in the postdramatic paradigm, which erases the hierarchy of the dramatic text as dominant element. He writes furthermore: "The body becomes the center of attention, not as a carrier of meaning but in its physicality and gesticulation." (Lehmann 95). According to him, the body has employed extreme qualities of physicality and through its presence and transgression has reached a state beyond signification. The body finds itself in the post-dramatic context searching for re-definition. Employing extreme physical lexicons, the body does not seem to represent or to convey meaning as such, rather to attain something beyond meaning through its physicality. According to Lehmann, a shift occurs in the postdramatic performances, which in its elusive nature creates a "fascination beyond meaning" (Lehmann 95). This fascination emerges from the fragmented shattered pathway to coherent meaning. It is in this framework that the PAB lens gives us a closer, magnified look on repetition's effect on the body triggering the imagination to co-construct meaning upon the physicality. The post-apocalyptic body functioning resides in a search for new ways to interrogate the body and pinpointing how repetition enables metamorphosis through the other. In the

heart of the functioning of the PAB, I have identified a productive link between repetition, perception and imagination. The PAB core mechanism is the access to a specific mode of analysis of spectatorship through the effects of repetition on the imagination of the beholder. Thus, generating a metamorphosis in our way to see, imagine and think of the body as a fragmented entity in becoming, rather than a fixed system of signs. Repetition is used as a pathway towards the (re)negotiation of meaning and perceptual change which elucidate the mutable nature of the body.

2.1.1 Rhizomatic nature

This thesis attempts to look at the body as a rhizomatic notion in its multiplicity and becomings, rather than a hierarchized exhaustive system. In conceiving their neologisms, Deleuze and Guattari created notions “that force us to think and conceptualize outside established, hegemonic, and naturalized modes of modern commonsense.” (Auslander 84). My proposal constitutes a snippet of the interpenetrating exchange between the artistic strategy of repetition and the potential for change in the way bodies are perceived and thought of. This cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the world and acts as a photograph of an ephemeral moment in a theatrical encounter, which has grown to become a source of questions and intriguing discoveries. Considering the multiplicity of subjectivity, one can consider the rhizomorphic state of imagination in spectatorship stemming from the disjunction/multiplication in being, seeing, imagining. Hence, creating parallel realities of exhausted possibilities develop roots of their own and reiterate innumerable possibles of realities that also inform on our own bodies as co-imagining entities. The way we see our own body, is informed by the way we perceive other bodies, hence our own *body-image* (Schilder) is influenced by the encounter. Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Schilder defines the concept of *body-image* as a rhizomatic mapping of the body’s boundaries: “one’s body-image does not simply coincide with the visible presence of one’s body. Rather, one’s body-image extends itself to any place any particle of one’s body has reached across space and across time.” (Schilder quoted by Lepecki 50). Lepecki further comments on presence: “a body that is never quite there in the context of its appearing” (Lepecki, 50-51). Schilder’s *body-image* implies a different approach to presence as a plural entity which relates to the parallel subjectivities created in the re-imaginings of possible realities. The PAB lens informs not only on the theatrical encounter and its experience but also on the metaphysical residues of the multiplicity created by the postwar body is originates from. The notion of the rhizome and the *body-image* make clearer and more concrete the way in which the post apocalyptic nature of the body takes place in the PAB lens point of view.

3. Chapter II: Vocabularies and Visuality

This chapter will firstly look at two artists that have used the primary vocabularies of repetition and exhaustion, which trigger the body's potential to access metamorphosis. Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre's methods work towards metamorphosing the image of the body, through challenging the ways we see and think. Their works gravitate on the edge of articulating the impossible and develop the imagination of what the body could become. Witnessing the body reinventing itself and redefining its own boundaries, gives the spectators a new imaginary vocabulary to cope with the shift occurring in expectations and perception when confronted with repetition and exhaustion effects. Considering this process, it is helpful to understand how and why the usage of these vocabularies in performances amounts to a change or a shift in the way we perceive bodies. Moreover, it will allow to create a theoretical framework around the notion of repetition and exhaustion, thus creating the opportunity to instrumentalize them as tools for the analysis of spectatorship. Through Deleuze's the reflection on exhaustion, I will explore how the body can reach its *potentiality* (Lehmann) and through Foucault's theory on repeatability I will investigate repetition's capacity as a tool for re-imagination. These two steps will help me articulate the relevance of repetition and exhaustion and their place in the encounter between performing body and spectator. Secondly, I will explore the protocols of this encounter through Bleeker's theory of visuality in order to theorize the processes and their implications on the spectator. This will furthermore help me sketch a schema of analysis, which I could apply on the case studies performance analysis in Chapter 3.

3.1 Vocabularies: Exhaustion and Repetition

3.1.1 Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre

Tracing back, Pina Bausch and Jan Fabre have used repetition and exhaustion in their explorations of the body as a political tool of transformation and metamorphosis since the 60's. Since then, the body has been subject and object of exhaustive theoretical and physical questioning, philosophizing, experimenting and criticizing. Through the investigation of the performances of Fabre and Bausch, this subchapter will seek to discover the theories and concepts belonging to the existing discourse around repetition and exhaustion. Furthermore, the analysis of their works will help to understand the outreach of their potential to critique political and societal issues. This exploration will not provide a history of these physical elements but will strive to map out the theoretical discourse surrounding repetition and exhaustion. Fabre's and Bausch's commitment is to stir the conventional images of the body by providing audiences with a metaphoric/transcendent dimension of the body, through the usage of repetition and exhaustion. They play with boundaries and expectations by subverting them or working against them. In their creation of new vocabularies and thus perspectives on the body, they emphasize different issues related to our times. It is therefore intriguing to see how these same elements become productive in the artists goals and how they are put to work.

Jan Fabre

Jan Fabre is a Belgian artist known for his extreme and radical performances using excessive physicality, repetition and exhaustion. His artistic drive emerges from the desire to re-discover the body through a perpetual metamorphosis on stage. For example, in his performance *Mount Olympus* that lasts 24 hours, the performers dance, jump, sing, scream, run, roll in multiple choreographic constellations on end. The ecstatic state of the bodies on stage, rolling sweaty on the ground, screaming and fighting to catch their breath, with glued layers of colored confetti and paint on their bodies set a specific and urgent frame to look at the body. The length, intensity and repetitive nature of each movement transforms the bodies into explosive unpredictable entities of energy and exhaustion which re-writes the experience of the body altogether. Thus, in order to apprehend this abnormal body the spectator is communicated new vocabularies through movement, excess, fatigue – a new language of the body, which amounts to a new understanding of its potential through experiencing its intensity from a perspective on its endurance and witnessing its transformation in to something beyond the physicality of the body. Fabre's performance is exemplar of the paradoxical nature of the body's metamorphosis as repetition affords this transformation through reiteration of an exhausted state which should lead to nothing else than more exhaustion and ultimately total collapse. Instead, in the friction between bodily limits and transgression of boundaries repetition creates an accumulation of those states and transform the body.

In his performance *Orgy of tolerance* (2009) humans are raised like shopping animals; "their survival instincts are governed by consumerist behaviour." (den Dries 422). Fabre presents us with a multi-faceted piece filled with extreme acts, states, exhaustion. The performance is a radical critique of consumeristic society and enacts the perverse excess of media images stuffed down our throats. In their analysis of this piece, den Dries and Combrez write: "The orgy in the title referred to the ecstasy of consumption. [...]. This piece embodies a vast variety of incessant actions and behaviors in the realm of pain, pleasure, madness and total excess, for examples the scene in which the performers waltz with shopping carts or masturbate each other incessantly just to start over. This contributes to the blurring of boundaries between extremes: rape/pleasure, manipulation/free will, violence/ tenderness etc. Fabre's bodies on stage are in constant metamorphosis, re-trashing the body and the psyche: "Orgy of Tolerance reveals the decay of the human race."(den Dries 430). His artistic vision aims towards "testifying to his continuous search to expose the raw expressive force of corporeality and to remodel the body's familiar appearances."(Gonzalez 298). In this sense, repetition and exhaustion as physical strategies reinforce the entrance into the raw tension of the body, allowing to defy the normative body and access a new level of corporeality perception. Ultimately, Fabre's performances are fueled by the "ardent desire to put the body through a state of perpetual metamorphosis in order to stir the audience's imagination with hybrid creatures that challenge the fixity of dominant images of the body in contemporary culture." (Gonzalez 298).

Pina Bausch

Pina Bausch and her Tanztheater present the body as a matter made of power relations, as a site of political and societal issues. Violence and repetition play a central role in the dramaturgies of the Tanztheater tradition and Bausch has been able to extract an ineffable beauty in the veracity of the emotion and quintessence of the suffering of the body. The notion of “obsession-compulsion” is important for exploring the significance of repetition in Bausch’s physical vocabularies based on the usage of relentless repetition, which opens new perspectives on the body. In *The politics of the body: Pina Bausch’s Tanztheater*, David Price observes that different realities of the imaginary are created in Bausch’s pieces. It is through the repetition of gestures and their decontextualization that the bodily expression of the same movement alters the expression into a constant flow of metamorphosis. “Pina Bausch draws attention to bodily gestures by alienating those gestures through performative acts of decontextualization” (Price 323). Furthermore, according to Ciane Fernandes, “Repetition is consistently used to subvert its own process of domination over the body, at aesthetic, cognitive, and social levels, for both dancers and audience. Through repetition, the Wuppertal Dance Theater transforms stable polarities such as dominated-dominator, dancers-audience, movement-words, body-mind, women-men, spontaneity-artificiality, daily life-theater, individual-society, meaning-form” (‘Pina Bausch and the Wuppertal Dance Theatre’, Fernandes). Through Fernandes’ observation, we can discover how the inner workings of Bausch’s choreographies are based upon the effects of repetition. It influences not only the body but also the perception of images and associations related to the movement. Fernandes also talks about the dynamic relations within these dichotomies: “[they] become dynamic modes of relationship, constantly exchanging, questioning, and transforming aesthetic, psychic, and social roles.” In this way, the power of repetition and its reverberations on the state of mind, create a dynamic transformation between the dancer and the spectator, unravelling a driving force in the heart of repetition. Associating this idea of re-establishment in repetition, Lehmann also writes “The body ‘retells’ and ‘redances’ its own history of domination, constantly repeating and transforming--‘redefining’—dance” (96). Through the invention of new physical intensity and impulse vocabularies, dance theatre uncovers “forgotten and retained possibilities of the body” (Lehmann 96) through its explorations within repetition as an image producer.

3.1.2 Repetition as a tool to re-imagine

The works of these two artists have established different dimensions around the perception of the body through their experimentation with repetition. Hence, one can think of repetition as a tool to access the re-thinking of bodies by challenging pre-conceptions and expanding our imaginations. Repetition is used differently in the works of Bausch and Fabre. It is interesting to explore how the same tool can give rise to different corporeality and spectatorship.

In “Aesthetics as Political Philosophy”, Cassier et al., write about Jan Fabre’s works and his process of “redrawing the boundaries of the body” (297). ‘This is Theater Like It Was To Be Expected and Foreseen’ (in 1983) is a piece which lasts eight hours, such as a full working day. The performers make different actions on stage (sitting, jumping, falling etc) and “maniacally” repeat them until complete exhaustion. Cassier describes this usage of repetition as contributing to the intensification of the theatricality of the actions, as well as to the reinforcement of the conceptual idea of criticism of the capitalistic work system. Concerning the same performance, Curtis Carter links what Foucault has written about language, to movement: “As Foucault has reminded us, each repetition of a statement, in this instance the repetition of an action in the play, may carry a different identity, requiring that we pay careful attention to what might appear on the surface to be the same action when it in fact carries a different meaning.” (Carter 22). In his book *Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault writes about the “repeatable materiality” (102) of a statement, which contains forms, structures and rules but potentially gains a different identity with each repetition. How does repetition contribute to a shift in identity/meaning? The perception of these repetitions is accumulated by the beholder from one movement to the next and therefore contribute to a change in their materiality by the temporal juxtaposition of changed perception. The process of repetition can be thus regarded as a self-serving loop, which re-actualizes the materiality of the movement with each repetition. Following this speculation, each next repetition carries another identity and contributes to the creation of an increasing intensity and to the entrance into another mode of looking and understanding the body as a whole.

3.1.3 Exhaustion as a tool to reach *potentiality*

Similarly to repetition, exhaustion implies several qualities, which contribute to the power of images seen in Bausch and Fabre’s performances. In their works, exhaustion emerges from repetition and alters the quality of movement as well as our perception of it. Carter analyses exhaustion as rendering the body more “concrete and real” (302) for the audience. The sweaty, struggling bodies, with their twitching muscles and loud breathing, change the relation between audience and performer. On a metaphysical and perceptual level, exhaustion can be seen as exhausting the possibles, and imaginaries as well as the bodies, thus exhausting reality itself, which in turn triggers the imagination to co-imagine them. Exhaustion in the context of Fabre’s bodily experiments is used to test the performer’s motor capabilities until a point from which the body reaches its complete potential. The unpredictability of movement in the body’s exhaustion and its state beyond control intensifies its presence and expands its potentiality. The post-dramatic origin of potentiality in the *theatre of the body* proposes “the body opens the pleasure and fear of a gaze into the paradoxical emptiness of possibility.” (Lehmann 163). The potentiality of the body holds all invisible and impossible scenarios, all unplannable possibilities on stage. It points to the omnipresent contradiction between the impossibility and the presence of more possibles. In *The exhausted*, Deleuze links the creation of possibilities and realizing them to the state of tiredness and

exhaustion: “The tired has only exhausted realization, while the exhausted exhausts all of the possible.” (3). In the impossibility to further *possibilise* (Protopapa) in the face of exhaustion, the exhausted becomes exhausted in exhausting the possibles. Looking back at Pina Bausch’s and Jan Fabre’s artworks, and their usage of repetition and exhaustion, we can see the body positioned in a fatalistic and extreme context: an anatomical reincarnation of perpetuity and insistence of exhausting all the muscles, all the images, all the imaginary. The body reaches its potentiality in exhausting the possibles and triggering the extreme imaginary vocabulary of what could never be, in the face of complete exhaustion. This strategy re-emerges the unsaid, the unknown and the unimaginable possibles in its radical exhaustion.

Deleuze also creates a link between his theory of the exhausted and Beckett’s characters playing with the possible (4). Beckett’s plays are constructed to exhaust their reality through the body and its confrontation to lack, solitude, questioning etc. Similarly, the idea of the decomposition of the I (spectatorial address strategy through *l’effacement du moi*) and the abolishing of the real through the exhaustion of possibilities, could be a path toward questioning the status quo. The potential outcome of looking through the PAB evokes new ways of relating to and imagining the non-real as a strategy to bridge the loss of significance or potential of the body.

The process of exhausting the possible through movement triggers the need for a new vocabulary in order to articulate its inner workings. “[...] if you hope thus to exhaust the possible with words, you must equally hope to exhaust words themselves; hence the necessity for another metalanguage” (Deleuze 7). The physical enumeration of decomposed actions exhausts the possible through movement. A metalanguage could function in an exhaustive loop of interaction between body images and spectator in order to articulate the re-actualization of the meaning accumulated through repetition. According to Deleuze there are several “ways of exhausting the possible: - form exhaustive series of things; - dry up the flow of voices; - extenuate the potentialities of space; - dissipate the power of the image.” (Deleuze 11-12). The connection between the exhausted body and the witnessing body encompasses a multilayered process involving reaching the potentiality of the body. Could we conceive the observation of bodily exhaustion as a generator of realities?

3.1.4 Exhaustion and repetition as vocabularies of metamorphosis

Throughout the exploration of Bausch and Fabre’s works, several effects of repetition and exhaustion were uncovered. Their aesthetic power of compositional tools was subservient to the political and social critiques of the two artists and helped look into their workings. In the context of their social engagement, Cassier writes that by confronting the norm’s boundaries they contribute to “rethink cultural anchoring and historical embedment” (Cassier 307). Foucault’s and Deleuze’s theories on repetition and exhaustion also provide a way to relate these physical vocabularies to shifting perceptions and

discovering the potential of the body. Through these two pillar artists, we can see a body that speaks up through new expressive vocabularies emerging from repetition and exhaustion, thus re-writing the spectatorial experience. Paradoxically, by following the norms and reiterating them through repetition, a twisted and ecstatic body breaks out of the pattern while still being in it. While the body on stage undergoes these processes, it becomes intriguing to explore what is their impact on the audience and what different phenomena occur in the encounter of bodies through the lens of the PAB.

3.2 An encounter through the lens of the PAB

In this second part, in order to make more visible the impact of the PAB lens on the encounter between performer and seer, I will question what audience address protocols are made visible and what assumptions the lens of the PAB carries towards the seer and the performer.

3.2.1 Theorizing the encounter

A schema

Theatre scholar Maaïke Bleeker's term *seer* refines the definition of the *spectator* and augments the potential he/she can have in the encounter with the performing body: "The seer is someone who sees things that are not there: future things, absent things. Seeing always involves projections, fantasies, desires and fears, and might be closer to hallucinating than we think." (Bleeker 18). This definition echoes the immaterial and new imaginary vocabularies the audience participates in and create a specific kind of seer through the lens of the PAB. On the other hand, the performer is seen through the PAB lens as embodying the desire for transcendence and metamorphosis through movement and consequently through the seer. Defining both the seer and the performer as such helps to re-imagine their encounter through the PAB as a constellation emphasizing the meaning and co-dependency between them. Bleeker has developed a new theoretical approach to the analysis of looking which helps grasping the process occurring between the performing body and its seer. Bleeker grounds her concept of *focalization* in the context of the postdramatic theatre while nevertheless, emphasizing the major role of the cultural and historical embeddedness of vision.

Analyzing the effects of the encounter

Focalization is a term introduced by Genette (1972) from narratology, which was conceptualized as a synonym of perspective and point of view. He distinguished between three levels of focalization – zero, internal and external. Zero degree of focalization offers a narrator who knows more than the character. The internal degree equality of the knowledge of the narrator and character, and in the external level, the narrator knows less than the character. These three levels of focalization offer different entry points and knowledge degrees to the character and his/her world. The reader is thus positioned in different ways towards the character and as the information offered is limited depending on the focalization the

understanding and perception of the reader fluctuates. Bleeker has borrowed the term and applied it to theatre. Focalization determines the encounter with an exhausted body through an explicit ultimatum of presence, engagement and active development of vocabularies originating from its radical address. “Focalization describes the relationship between this vision and that which is ‘seen’.” (Bleeker 27). Unlike perspective, it does not mask the distance between the subject seeing and the object seen through strategies of absorption. *Focalization* as a process allows to pinpoint how the seer is invited to identifyⁱⁱ with a representation or perceive the subject of vision. Different focalizers, elements of the performance which build the process of identification, offer a multiplicity of perceiving and more importantly an awareness of the vantage point of representation. The body on stage can be seen as challenging the seer’s interpretation of reality, through its own questioning of the physical limits and the perceptual effects it creates. Although, the seer seems relatively free in looking at the performing body, he/she is offered a limited scope of vision. If we follow Bleeker’s logic, seeing things the way they are is simply impossible. Our gaze and perception are forged through our socio-cultural and historical existence. The vision implied in the compositional practices of performances can be implicit or explicit, but it is always originating from a particular perspective on reality. The vantage point of a dramaturgy is omnipresent in the choices of attention guidance, which also defines a specific way of looking. Being confronted to a non-normative body such as in Fabre’s performances, exceeding all rational or logical boundaries, transcending its presence through the intensity and physicality, reverses codes of image appropriation. The seer can no longer ignore or dismiss this body as simply provocative, as a relation has been built between the bodies in the encounter and their new vocabularies contribute to a re-imagination of the elusive impossibility of the body to be fixed and defined.

Intoxicated spectatorship?

In the schema of seer-performer, a connection is established throughout a performance relying on the effects movement has on the audience. There are many different theories on the question of how movement affects us (kinesthetic empathy, mirror neurons, inner mimicry etc.). These theories research how movement establishes a strong visceral connection with the seer and results in a feeling of unity with the state of the performers. Reacting to Fischer-Lichte, Bleeker evokes the “shift in axis” (64) which took place in the postmodern phase in spectatorship, defining this shift as “a new kind of ‘unity’ of actors and spectators and even at transforming the spectators into new beings” (64). Fischer-Lichte writes: “To transport them into a state of ‘intoxication’ or ‘trance’ to liberate their creativity and develop it or simply shock them” (quoted by Bleeker 64). This shift seems to assume a unity between performers and audience rather unilaterally. In other words, the audience is *being* transported into another state through the strategies employed by the performers. Liberating the creativity of the audience does necessitate a trigger from the performance, however the involvement and co-actualization of the audience seems to exceed the scope of a designed and controlled state. The seer becomes a co-creating entity by contributing and building *with* what is given on stage and *how* it is framed. Therefore, the seer acts as an active contributor to the state he/she is in and contributes to a shared (metaphysical) by-product,

through the active meaning-making process. Hence, it becomes interesting to interrogate the state of ‘intoxication’ or ‘trance’, which might emerge not only from this “new kind of ‘unity’”, but also as an effect of repetition and exhaustion. Bleeker defines seeing as “an activity that takes place at the intersection of the physical possibilities of bodies and how these are shaped by cultural conditioning.” (17). Therefore, the excessive experimentation around endurance, repetition and exhaustion sets an unusual provocation of the physical possibilities of the body, which echo in the stirred vision of the audience. In the process of vision, the encounter through the PAB lens offers the potential to acquire a new perspective onto the transformation, which occurs in the relation between a specific seer who fulfills the creation of a new imagination through his/her perception and what is seen.

4. Chapter III: Performance analysis

4.1 Questioning and Dramaturgy

The mode of questioning the case studies through the lens of the PAB involves an awareness of the assumptions that this body-lens as a notion carries as well as its nuanced position towards the theories discussed in the previous chapter. Interrogating the Arno Schuitemaker’s *While We Strive* (WWS) and Jan Martens’ *The Dog Days Are Over* will help deepen the exploration around the functioning of the PAB and how it can be put to work to analyze the effects of repetition on spectatorship. Looking at these case studies as opportunities to interrogate the body, performance is seen “as a generative force: to destroy pretence, to shock, to break apart traditions of representation, to foreground the experiential, to activate audiences, to open different kinds of engagement with meaning” (This is Live Art, Heathfield). And in this sense as a productive encounter between audience and performer.

4.1.1 Methodology & interrogating a performance with the PAB

The considerations around the methodology revolve around two main questions, which are how to *put* the PAB *to work* in order to analyze current performance art? And how to instrumentalize the theoretical framework from the previous chapters? With the previously investigated theories and concepts I will try to productively unravel the compositional strategies of the pieces while including the layers of the post-apocalyptic body and its particularities. The rhizomatic web around the PAB will allow me to identify in detail and analyze the perceptual phenomena in Schuitemaker’s and Marten’s pieces. In the same process of analysis, it will become clearer how the PAB lens can also be a tool of investigation of the seer’s experience.

Schuitemaker’s performance *WWS* has been chosen as case study for this thesis because it is a current performance exploring the relation performer/ audience, experimenting on different modes of perception

and mainly using repetition. I think this performance can be looked at from the PAB lens in a productive way as it not only helps to unravel its perceptual phenomena but also unlocks its potential and expands its striated nature. Marten's performance *THE DOG DAYS ARE OVER (TDDO)* uses repetition very differently and therefore offers diversity and flexibility in the usage of the PAB lens. Ultimately, both performances create new vocabularies and achieve metaphysical expansions of the imaginary through the involvement of the seer. The usage of repetition and exhaustion are key in putting the seer in a position in which she/he cannot ignore or dismiss the confrontation with the body, its limits, and a potential end. A visceral connection is established between the extreme encounter and the inability to withhold projection of the self and therefore become personally involved as a temporal and mortal being.

4.2 Case studies

4.2.1 Relation audience performers

While we Strive

As described on Schuitemaker's website: "Each performance shapes a unique empathetic relationship between the audience and the performers. His perception-based works are immersive, visceral and mesmerizing, shedding new lights on notions as rhythm, repetition and endurance." ("About Arno Schuitemaker") Schuitemaker's usage of endurance opens the possibility to study the staging of repetition and exhaustion and its impact on the audience. In the search for different ways to interconnect spectator and performer the composition of *WWS* is based on repetition which is seen to contribute to a shift in perception. During the rehearsalⁱⁱⁱ of *WWS*, the piece crystallized the experience of an intense perceptual relation between dancers and seers. The intriguing exploration of the performance resides in its search to couple movement with sound and thus create a new sensorial and perceptual vocabulary for the seer, forging a different way to experience movement. This audio-visual integration rewrites the seer's experience, resulting in a new way of experiencing movement and the body on stage. The overarching focus of Schuitemaker's work revolves around how we relate to the other. The choreography and the spatial setting, act as performative elements in building the relation between two others: audience and performers.

The Dog Days Are Over

Jan Martens' main compositional strategy is the repetition of jumping in different geometrical configurations and rhythms. Throughout the whole performance, the eight performers never stop jumping in devised accurate mathematical combinations. The starting point for the piece is a quote by American photographer Philippe Halsman: "When you ask a person to jump, his attention is mostly directed toward the act of jumping and the mask falls so that the real person appears." ("THE DOG DAYS ARE OVER"). This piece is relevant to look at through the PAB lens not only because of the

physical vocabularies it uses, but also because of its focus on creating a shift by a constant back and forth of reflectivity of the seer on his/her experience. *TDDO* aims to make the seer shift between being in the experience and reflecting on that same experience. It addresses the viewer through its never-ending intensity, humor and enticing choreography. As Martens himself said in an interview: “The performance will be a work that brings the spectator in a trance, but will also create a distance and time for that same spectator to question his or her reasons to be where they are right now: in the theatre.” (Romaeuropa).

The subjective point of view implied in the piece is a critique embedded in our ways of looking and our visual consumption of art and especially dance. It could be seen suggesting that the seer considers dance as a virtuosity performed in anonymity for the pleasure of voyeurism and implicates that the seer will feel uncomfortable once confronted by this in the specific case of dancers jumping for one hour and sweating in front of people who paid to see them. The piece develops a non-equal relation between seer and performer based on its primary goal to unearth the assumptions one might have about dance in the loss of familiar technique and composition. The uncomfortable and uneasy/humoristic atmosphere sets the stage for an intense experience of the now in retrospect. The audience address desires re-consideration, re-thinking and questioning of the role of the spectator – the performance targets the seer as a cultural target, as a responsible entity for where art is going towards – for a differentiation between the theatre as a place for entertainment and the theatre as a place for thinking and re-consideration of the reality we live in.

4.2.2 Spectatorship

The PAB lens conceives the seer as an active entity through which the body of the performer can find renewal and therefore strive for an expanded re-imagined concept of the body, of what it can or cannot be. The performer is thus seen as an embodiment of the post-apocalyptic body from the post-war and Beckettian world, deprived and standing on the edge of nothingness, it is fighting for its re-building. It is through this schema that the spectatorship analysis of the two case studies will be lead. I will explore how these performances position the spectator and what specificity of spectatorial address they exhibit through pinpointing the elements (*focalizers*) they use to convey their vantage point, which could shed more light on *what* plays a role in the positioning of the seer. My proposition is that the perceptual and physical strategies contribute to trigger the seer’s perception by building new vocabularies, which constitutes a new way to see the body. In order to investigate this claim I will first outline the positioning and meaning making processes of the seer and secondly, study repetition and its effects of exhaustion as influences on perception, which are proposed to afford the re-imagination of the body.

The seer & visuality protocols

In *TDDO*, eight performers in sports shoes and colorful spandex clothes take the stage as if preparing for a marathon. They stretch, take deep breaths, check the laces of their shoes. They all take their positions as chess pawns and begin jumping in the same rhythm. Different configurations unfold as they all rotate clock-wise and back, slowly changing their spatial positions and re-configuring through different jumping rhythms their hands glued to the sides of their bodies, their heads upright. This choreography presents a sort of game or competition staged for the entertainment of the audience. This playful surface sets a certain lightness, which predisposes the viewer to be more receptive and relaxed. It presents a lens to the viewer in the enactment of its suppositions that we want to witness *dance* as a perfectionist egocentric illusion which already embodies a clear critique. The seer is offered this focalized position, which he/she renegotiates until the end of the performance through reflection and humor. The derision in the playfulness adds to the bitter-sweetness of the piece and uncovers an intriguing striated effect of multilayered targeting of the viewer. The dancers perform different jumps, which sometimes include exaggerated jazz hands or classical ballet movements executed in complete seriousness. These isolated technique moments create a *mise en abyme* of the humoristic or rather caricaturist images of dance, discipline and endurance by pointing back to the present situation of these dancers actually going through the same process of rehearsal and body-conditioning which is critiqued. The humoristic decontextualization is one of the focalizers, which ensures the renegotiation of the positioning of the spectator. The physicality of the piece creates a friction between two elements: the positioning of the seer through focalization and the passage from the facade of the dancer as anonymous virtuoso to their intimacy.

In *WWS*, the three performers on stage start by standing face to face with the audience in silence. The bodies of the performers actively engage their physical presence and attention with the audience by standing close to the first row and by searching for the eyes of the spectators. The gaze of the performers positions the seer and sets the stage for intimacy and complicity from the start. Their attentive and intense gazes establish a particular connection, which breaks the wall of anonymity by identifying each and every one as individuals. This inclusive practice in the beginning of the piece positions the spectator as an intimate participant of what will occur on stage and emphasizes certain preconceptions around the role of the spectator by emphasizing their awareness of being visible. In this sense, the choice to tune in the spectator out of the comfortable anonymity and into a self-reflection, openly leads their attention towards the ways of looking. The physical lexicon of the dancers is largely based on repetition. In order to explore the power of repetition and exhaustion as its effect, it becomes intriguing to look into what repetition affords and how it influences the seer's perception.

Both performances implicate different roles for the seer through *focalization* and thus transmit their vantage point and inner perceptive on the piece. As defined by Bleeker the *seer* is enabled to see more

than what is shown, through his/her cultural preconditioning expressed through projections, desires and fears, which participate in the imagination and formation of a *newly experienced* body. This definition echoes the immaterial and new imaginary vocabularies the post-apocalyptic body allows to identify in the perception of the seer through repetition and exhaustion. In this sense the projection is not unilateral but comes from the performance and from the seer. This creates space around the notion of spectator to be seen as a co-creating entity “through the theatrical relationship” (de Marinis 101). Both sides initiate a frame of reference for the meaning making process. Furthermore, de Marinis talks about the spectator as more than a “coproducer of the performance, the spectator is relatively autonomous “maker of meanings” for the performance; its cognitive and emotive effects can only be truly actualized by the audience.” (102). While a full autonomy of meaning making is debatable, the seer not only co-produces meaning and projections but also actualizes the effects of the performance and therefore could be speculated to access a deeper level of association-making with the images of the body.

The seer’s co-production relies on active meaning making which is elicited by different elements of the performances. It is in the negotiations between the two-sided projections that the seer positions him/herself and starts participating in the perceptual and cognitive actualization of the performance. Therefore, the way a performance like *TDDO* builds up a role for the spectator through humor and critique evokes a certain reaction and specifies a type of perceptual response. The superposition of focalization elements dictates a mode of looking activated by the core desires of the piece. When focusing on what the piece strives to achieve it is important to nuance its manipulative potential. As de Marinis defines it, the manipulative potential of a performance is not explicitly to “persuade or seduce” but is rather “an intrinsic aspect of the performance/spectator relationship” (102). In the context of this potential, Schuitemaker’s piece does not act as a political performance with the aim to change the audience’s behavior or beliefs, but to establish a strong sensorial relation between audience and performers and build new vocabularies for movement perception. As for Martens’ piece, it is through the forged relationship between performer as dancer, as person, as body and the seer that a subtle but powerful stir in ways of consuming the body in the theatre occurs. In this case, focalization facilitates the emergence of a second consciousness due to the focus on a disjunctive identification with the performing body.

The trio of performers in *WWS* also plays with different constellations of bodies and roles by constantly being in a connected loop, which creates the effect of echo in their movements in a shifting loop of impulses: dancer – dancer, seer – dancer, sound – body – movement. The trio can be seen as a metamorphic entity, a common body reacting to different impulses carried through waves of movement. The encounter between these bodies and the audience creates an inclusive relation based on rhythm, repetitive movement and trance-like atmosphere. The prolonged repetition of movements which lasts for almost an hour contributes to the trance-like feeling which can be seen “to liberate their [the seers’] creativity and develop it” (Fischer-Lichte quoted by Bleeker 64). In *TDDO*, a similar trance-like

sensation is created by the never-ending jumping of a multiple body, which slowly starts to uncover the faces behind the role of the dancer. The play on the seer's position as a witness to exhaustion and in confrontation with his/her expectation of a dance performance is the result of a back and forth between the state of observation and voyeurism. Diving further into the physical vocabularies of these pieces will uncover in more depth the effects of repetition and exhaustion on the seer's perception.

4.3 Physical vocabularies

4.3.1 Repetition

In *TDDO*, repetition is the core ingredient to the humoristic yet critical nature of the work. It not only affords to see the staged body as plural but also affects the seer in his/her integrity as witness and co-producer on these levels. Repetition uncovers different layers of the body as dancer, as athlete, as a vulnerable self. A tired body in colorful spandex pants and leopard print bra, changes from artificial, light, to heavy and imperfect through the repetition. The intricate choreography and mathematical rhythmic precision augments the chance for visible errors as the heard of jumping bodies tires down and covers in sweat. Each error, each imperfection and momentary suspension creates more closeness and provokes the attention. Stopping and starting, playing with rhythm, shouting numbers - the repetition of mathematical jumping infuses the auditorium, with a steady beat it mimics an army workout. The occasional squeaky noises from the running shoes on the floor create an uncanny feeling, with each irregularity the almost-automatons are brought back to life. Repetition in *TDDO* amounts to various effects on the seer's attention and position, which enable reflection and questioning of meaning and direction, uncovering the layers of the body and thus a constant re-positioning. Similarly to Jan Fabre's performances, the bodies on stage are the result of heavy training and rehearsal. Their reiterative practice based upon stamina and endurance recreates a sense of frenetic pushing of the corporeal boundaries.

In *WWS*, repetition creates different effects. In comparison to Bausch and Fabre's usage of repetition and exhaustion, Arno Schuitemaker's piece employs a more abstract usage, in the sense of explicitly formulating a political critique. The political and social context in Bausch and Fabre's work is explicit and concrete as it frames the repetition and the physical vocabulary in a specific political or social critique by using concise and recognizable physical vocabularies. However, this does not strip down Schuitemaker's work from a political connotation. The latter could reside in emphasizing the deficiency of "real" relationship or communication between people, thus problematizing how to relate to the other nowadays. Therefore, the abstraction is localized on a corporeal level, however, as we will uncover throughout the potential of repetition and exhaustion, this abstraction extends to a metaphysical level within the process of co-imaging. The re-imagination or questioning of the body might not change the seer's world view or self-image, but will attempt to problematize the formation of the image we have of the body.

Potentiality

“Theatre of the body is a *theatre of potentiality* turning to the unplannable ‘in-between-the-bodies’ and bringing to the fore the potential as a threatening dispossession (as Lyotard theorizes it in the concept of the sublime) and simultaneously a promise” (Lehmann 163). Lehmann theorizes the experience the body as one that does not carry meaning or content, but arrives at the experience of potentiality. The sublime origin he mentions and its paradoxical nature of dispossession and promise, translate into its embodiment through physical repetition. Repetition lays the groundwork for the experience of the potentiality of the body by creating a space for the accumulation of all re-creation of the moment and movement, laying bare the inner vulnerability and simultaneously power of the body in its precarious state. My claim is that repetition affords expanding and reaching the potentiality of the body, which culminates in its exhaustion. Potentiality englobes all possibles and yet by exhausting them through repetition, the paradoxical state of this body emerges with intensified presence.

Since the beginning of the piece *WWS* and until later on, repetition is devoted to the audio-visual integration. Then, once tiredness settles in and the bodies on stage start to seem manipulated by the perpetual tiresome reiteration beyond the integration of movement and sound, repetition becomes subservient to exhaustion and through its effects accumulates onto a glimpse of the potentiality of the body. In the first moments after looking at the audience the three performers take three grenade shaped wireless speakers which fit into their hands. They explore the wind-like sound coming out of them in relation to their position in space and their movements, starting to move and to draw circular movements into space. With each change of velocity, rhythm and spatial positioning the sound changed. The opening of the speaker was also tested as another variable, shut against the body, covered by a hand or quickly uncovered, swung, hidden etc. Repetition here serves the demonstration by building up the initial interplay between sound making and movement. The repetitive wave-like immersive sounds performed by the dancers by swinging the speakers back and forth opening them and closing them towards the audience, mark the start of a repetitive pattern of movement and sound, which will be a tool of exploration for the rest of the performance. The three dancers explored these qualities together with the audience. They created a way to communicate through the devices, for example by opening and closing the opening of the speaker, varying its volume etc. In this sense, the first part of the performance is instrumental for the establishment of the visual and hearing pairing through the introduction of a new sound vocabulary, which will be later paired to the movement vocabulary. Ultimately achieving a new way to perceive movement through sound. Beyond the scope of the aims of the performance, the repetitive movement vocabulary creates different sound dynamics linked to the repetitions. With each repetition, the movement is subject to almost imperceptible changes, which create a multitude of sound-movement drawings in space, thus re-drawing the contours and re-creating traces of sound. The passage from one movement shape to the next was executed gradually passing through an array of repetitive reiterations migrating in space. Until the moment when sound and movement become one: sound

became visible and movement became audible. The becoming of a new vocabulary opened new perceptual possibilities. Therefore, repetition plays a key role in the development of the physical vocabulary, its pairing with sound and their perceptual outcomes.

Going deeper into the mechanics behind repetition it becomes intriguing to unpack how the repetition of a movement carries a fluid multiplicity which could contribute to a transformation in the seer's experience.

Reiteration of meaning and identity

Repetition for the PAB lens is at the heart of the mechanism allowing for a re-thinking of the body and its perceptual construct. As described in the last chapter, Foucault's writing on language expands the outreach of the "repeatable materiality of a statement" to movement. Therefore, movement is assigned the potential of having the same characteristics as a statement, which implies that we can read into the movement as a carrier of a specific meaning. According to Sperber and Wilson's pragmatic theory (2012), the principle of relevance states that with every utterance the speaker makes, he/she conveys that what he/she has said is relevant. Applying this *relevance principle* to the communicative context of a performance and specifically to movement, the audience (unconsciously) assumes that the repetition has to be meaningful. Thus, repetition naturally draws attention to the importance of each movement, and triggers a re-consideration of the vehiculated meaning. This contributes to my proposition that repetition creates an accumulation of plural meaning and therefore explains how repetition reiterates identity. Following Lehmann's thought on *the theatre of the body* being without meaning or content, repetition could be the artistic strategy allowing the re-living of the body's potentiality. However, the seer's newly adopted perceptual vocabularies seem to give access to a meaning or rather to a body that is extracted from the experience and is kept in suspension and content re-thinking. In sum, repetition not only emphasizes the importance of the movement, but also vehiculated a striated meaning based on accumulations, therefore allowing for the reiteration of meaning in the seer's perception. Through the actualization of associated images that surround the perception of the body, repetition amounts to a striated multiplicity of re-actualized *meanings*, which contribute to a re-imagination of the body.

The multiplicity of repetition in *WWS* comes from the juxtaposition of sensorial perceptions. Nuancing it from Fabre's creative process and re-appropriated in this piece, redrawing the boundaries is produced spatially with each repeated movement in ongoing transformation. The bodily boundaries are retraced sensorially through sound and movement. Repetition in this case also formulates a certain understanding of the body through different degrees of intensity. Different scenes of the piece contain accelerations in combination with the music, light or space. These elements stress different aspects of the movement in repetition and in this way construct different actualizations of the reiteration of each movement. The diversity of nuances in redefining the body through repetition offer a rich palette of "looking" vocabularies. For example, when the lights are dimmed and one can only see the dark silhouettes of the

trio on stage, or when the projectors create a double or quadruple shadow of each body – the identity and associative images in the repetitive strategy are framed and guided into specific ways to co-imagine the re-drawn boundaries of the body. With time, the slight differences in trajectories or velocity create a resonance in their common constellation of reiterations and start exhibiting tiredness.

In *TDDO* repetition “tries to reveal the person behind the dancer” (“THE DOG DAYS ARE OVER”). It can be seen to uncover the subjectivity of the body and its many roles (dancer, athlete, private individual). The intensity of the jumping and the different formation of the bodies play a game of precision and endurance. The painful synchronicity and occasional irregularities start composing the tune of these sweaty bodies staged for the sake of re-thinking and re-positioning the seer. With time, the dancer’s cheeks become red, sweat is dripping from their hair and some clothes are soaking wet. The divergence between the dancer-body, the athlete-body, the self-body and their constant hammering repetition pushes them further and further away clearly exposing the vulnerable links, melting down the facades. Repetition digs deep and infuses the seer with the contagious rhythm of the play. Soon the tune is playing in the laughing audience and we are all in the game. Repetition integrates the seer into a multimodal visual account of the body-machine as a potential self and sets different paths for discovery and reflection.

Repetition is a driving force with one inevitable ending linked to the body’s incapability to repeat indefinitely. Little by little, fatigue infiltrates itself into the movement affecting its qualities and soon, exhaustion naturally takes its place in the muscles, trajectories and reiterations. Exhaustion does not only impact the physicality of the body but also its perception, taking onto the expansion of repetition’s effects. Therefore, it also alters the sensorial vocabularies and their usage in the relation between staged body and seer.

4.3.2 Exhaustion

Achieving metamorphosis

As it has been shown in pieces by Bausch and Fabre such as *Olympus* and *Cafe Muller*, exhaustion as a consequence of perpetual repetition puts the body in an extreme state of boundary negotiation between striving towards the impossible to reach beyond its corporeal limitation and postponing the physical collapse. These works, similarly to *WWS* and *TDDO*, achieve metamorphosis through their usage of exhaustion. Exhaustion as a physical strategy is not regarded simply as an inevitable consequence of repetition. It constitutes a state, physical and mental, which facilitates a next step into the re-negotiation of bodily boundaries. Schuitemaker creates a way to exhaust the movement perceptually by developing a nuanced choreography encompassing various abstract sequences of movement tracing the fine contour of each and every spatial translation. My claim is that the repetitive choreography ultimately creates “alternative ways of imagining the world” (Turner 92) through the body. For *TDDO* the dissociated nature of the identification stems from the divorce of the seer’s bodily sensations and the co-imagination of impossible states. This phenomena occurring in each seer amounts to a common cloud of

metaphysical restructuring between body-seen, body-felt and body in re-actualization. In the following part, I will explore how exhaustion participates in this metamorphosis and what its impact is on the seer's perception.

Physical ellipsis

On a physical level, the bodies' exhaustion and repetitions are hypothesized to trigger the imagination of the seer, which contributes to the metamorphosis on our perception of the body. My proposition is that one of the elements in this process is the *physical ellipsis*. The term ellipsis is borrowed from literature and film, as a narrative device, which creates space for the reader (or seer) to fill in the narrative gaps. It is adapted here as the temporal and physical suspension between repetitions embodying a gap between each repetition of a movement. Those suddenly atemporal suspensions between reiterations constitute the trigger of imagination based on the vocabularies and other performative elements. This trigger integrates the seer in a reflection loop and an active filling of the gaps as it requires a perceptual binding of the reiterations. Thinking back to what de Marinis called *coproducer* and moreover *agent of actualization* of the performance, the seer is in the position to fill in the blanks a performance creates. The accumulation of historical, cultural and individual preconditions of seeing offers potential fillings of the blanks. The seer is not suspended in complete incomprehension, but rather pushed to relate actively and bind the experience of the body and his/her imagination. In that sense, *WWS* and *TDDO* can be seen as performances which offer vocabularies with many blanks to be filled as their structures are carefully weaved towards a visceral trance-like symbiosis and a perceptual discovery. These elements dictate a direction but cannot be said to control the actualization and meaning making of the seer. This is precisely where the power of these compositions resides, allowing for the re-imagination of the impossible by triggering reflection and a potentiality for meaning around the body based on the cultural singularities surrounding the seer's perception.

Meta-language

The effect of exhaustion can be also theorized as a source of *possibilising*. In developing the concept of possibilising, Protopapa proposes that "the concept of 'possibilising' (after Deleuze), [...] allows for exhausting movement to appear not as an endpoint, but rather as an opening out of new possibilities in/for dance." (168). In the seer's accumulated perception throughout the actualization of repetition, the exhaustion of possibles is attained at a moment in which the body is perceived as stagnant and unable to go beyond its limited corporeality. However, the seeming paralysis of this state and its intense and stubborn challenging, result in the exhaustion of all possibles of actualization and meaning making (rendering the exhaustion productive^{iv}). The seer exhausts the re-imagination loop and there emerges a "necessity for another metalanguage" (Deleuze 7) in order to articulate the impossible of the exhaustion. In *WWS*, the performer/seer circuit employs two of Deleuze's ways of exhausting the possible: "form exhaustive series of things" and "dissipate the power of image" (Deleuze 11-12). Taken quite literally

in the repetition and exhaustion context, movement can be seen as a series of actions, a chain of physical precise repetitions exhausting all possible trajectories, all relations linked/tied/emphasized and perhaps all perceptual binding of the seer. In *TDDO*, the innumerable jumping coordination amount to an exhaustive spatial presence at all points that need to be *hit*. The dancers exhaust their bodies in the geometrical game creating exhaustive series of jumping covering every centimeter of the stage. This creates exhaustive end to an exhausting exploration in which the body attempts re-definition in the relation between seer and performer. As for the dissipation of the power of image, the physical ellipsis and the dense metamorphic spatial repetition blur the contour of the body. The dissipation resides in the juxtaposition of the present body with its exhausted possibles and impossible alterations, thus creating a space for re-imagination detached from its image. Through the body's exhaustion and the seer's perception, a metalanguage is forged as a new vocabulary. This meta-language can function as an encounter in which the new perceptual and sensorial vocabularies meet the seer and co-create in this language of exhaustion a vocabulary of imagination. The exhaustion of possibles and the potentiality of the body affords a new lexicon between performer and seer, which enables the co-imagining and construction of new bodies, impossible bodies.

4.3.3 Case studies and PAB lens

The PAB lens helped unravel detailed metaphysical outcomes in the usage of repetition. It provides a more complex vision on the strategies and their outreach beyond the case studies core aims. The PAB lens allowed to explore further the seer's involvement with the performers as a productive entity, through an active actualization and co-production of the experience of the body the seer was set out to re-imagine the body through filling the blanks of its physical ellipsis and articulating the metalanguage of repetition. In this analysis, the PAB lens allowed to extract details and images associated with the body such as the multiple role of the seer in the re-thinking of the body and the plurality of the staged body in its involvement of the seer. The two case studies provided several superposed ways of positioning the audience through aiming at a shift in their role, including them personally through the gaze or creating self-reflexivity through humor. This analysis elucidated how through targeting the seer with the desires and assumptions of the perspective of the pieces, and through the effects of repetition and exhaustion the body can reach its re-definition through reaching its potentiality. Repetition rendered the seer engaged with re-living the state of the body and creating an excess of imaginary possibilities in its potentiality. The PAB lens unraveled the body's desire for transformation onto the seer's perception through the radical nature of the encounter with the staged body and therefore the productive link to the post-apocalyptic body perceived in the repeating dancers. The PAB lens clearly emphasized the importance of the seer in the renewal of the body today and helped understand the link between exposing the post-apocalyptic body suffering and its productive impact on the seer's perception, which amounted to a common reiteration of its state. Based on this research, this lens could hold a potential beyond the theatrical encounter in its ability to re-animate the potential of the body on re-thinking. Taking into

account the PAB political nature, could the identified strategies in performances become a lens to look at encounters in society?

5. Discussion

The potential of the PAB lens as a tool in a larger context stems from its ways of conceiving the body's suffering as a productive way to engage its viewers, which can serve to its re-imagination stirring up the preconceived perceptions. The PAB potential to become relevant outside of the theatre resides in its engagement to provoke perceptual change, which leaves traces beyond the staged encounter with performers. Looking at society as a "mass control of bodies and movement" (Foucault), how do concepts of analytical thought such as the PAB help unravel the encounter with the everyday (political) body? For Foucault, our docile bodies are products of the regime of surveillance and punishment and inform our ways of looking and moving. Expanding on this thought, Deleuze talks about "societies of control" in which control has propagated far beyond the factory, and is omnipresent in all activities of everyday life, thus diminishing the need for discipline. Freedom becomes regulated by control, and people become *self-policing* (Lepecki), self-regulated bodies acting in accord with the ideological values. In a society of unconscious self-policing, the encounter and interpellation through a non-normative body could amount to a re-thinking of the body and through this a re-thinking of the apparatuses which influence behaviors. The protocols of this encounter expose a body using non-normative strategies and a desire for redefinition through means of appearing radical in its physicality, and engage the spectator with its presence and struggle to transgress its own limits. In this context, different forms of media create specific encounters between bodies, which confront our subjectivity to irregularities in our representations of the world. Social encounters with non-normative bodies (for example disabled, handicapped, homeless, beggars etc) can be seen to trigger *interpellation* (Althusser). It could be hypothesized that it stems from the clash between the normative body as reiterative of normative behavior and the non-normative body as interpellation of this behavior. The confrontation and decontextualization of behavior occurs through the vision of a radically different body not reiterating normal behavior and its different vocabularies of expression, which could amount to awareness of 'normal' behavior as a product of control. Thus, this encounter has the potential to rewrite the experience of looking at the body through the non-normative body. The PAB is productive for looking at the non-normative bodies as agents of change, which can be speculated to leave traces of the seer's perception and induce critical thought on the preconceptions acting on perception. The PAB pinpoints the activation of extreme imagination through the confrontation with radical difference and the decontextualization of behavior and habits, which provokes a re-evaluation of normativity and of the self. This encounter can be explored furthermore as it holds the power of a radical re-thinking of the body, of our own subjectivity and reality.

The PAB lens carries a set of features, which allow this body-lens to envision confrontational encounters with the body in its different states and elaborate on the processes involved in the reconsideration of the

non-normative body from an unsettling view, to an agent of rethinking. It thus functions as a re-search of the body as an object of projection and as a source/reflection on subjectivity and as a lens on the transformative bodily encounter outside of theatre. The introvert scope of the PAB has the potential to become a critical tool in a larger societal context, and furthermore, a paradigm for the analysis of encounters and experiments with the perception of the radical bodies and their critical outreach. It becomes therefore a multifaceted analytical tool engaged in the better understanding of how emancipated perception is triggered through the non-normative encounter and its importance to induce change in the way we see the body.

6. Conclusion: Towards a multimodal usage of the PAB lens

This thesis sought to explore and define the conceptual lens of the PAB as a perspective on repetition as artistic strategy in spectatorship which renders the theatrical encounter an opportunity to re-imagine the body and thus create a possibility for a perceptual and metaphysical transformation. The PAB allowed an enquiry into the body in a context of loss of meaning and ontological exhaustion. Revising the state of the body in the aftermath of the death camps explored by the absurdist movement of the post-war epoch is linked to the scarcity of sense and the ravaged boundaries of what the human body can endure and forever a lingering image in the background. The exhaustion of possibles for the body today triggered my interest in re-discovering and re-questioning this seemingly paralyzed and agonizing body. The PAB lens was designed to take into account the post-apocalyptic nature of the body's state today but also seek to lay bare its relentless fight for revival and transformational potential. Hence, the lens of the PAB counter-balanced the assumption of the body being a passive suffering entity that is dissociated from subjectivity and thus impossibly dislocated from real redemption, by concentrating on the intricate perceptual and sensorial effects of repetition which empower the body through the other. Elucidating the relevance and effect of repetition and exhaustion as tools leading to metamorphosis of the body-image, re-positioning and re-thinking of the seer, allowed to identify them as core vocabularies generating a bridge of exchange in the theatrical encounter. The case studies helped articulate the effects of those physical strategies and their sensorial and perceptual impact on the audience as driving forces towards a perceptual emancipation. *While We Strive* allowed entering into a new visual paradigm in performance art merging vocabularies of looking and engaging the seer in a perpetual loop of re-discovering the experience of movement, positioning the seer through an intimate gaze inclusion and a trance. *The Dog Days Are Over* exemplified the process of re-positioning the seer and offering a pluralistic approach to seeing dance and being a seer. Juggling between radical physicality and humoristic decontextualization of the movement, repetition uncovered the layers of the stratified nature of performing and witnessing gradually shedding the masks of the performers. In both case studies the PAB lens facilitated to identify the encounter as productive and carrier of a perceptual shift through the confrontation with the postwar body in the incessant repetition of its suffering and the strategies of each piece.

By positioning the performer and seer in a circuit of exchange and co-production, the PAB lens helped emphasize and pinpoint how perceptual strategies amount to a change in perception and in a renewal of the body. Through the appropriation of different theories (Bleeker, Deleuze, Foucault) and the development of speculative tools (physical ellipsis, perceptual emancipation etc.), the PAB lens amounted to a productive approach towards repetition in spectatorship and allowed the mapping out of the process of metamorphosis. Establishing a strong link between repetition and exhaustion as relevant tools today and carrier of transformational potential, made a strong case for the body as a powerful entity capable to challenge its status. These processes helped unravel a much more important role of the seer as re-imaginative entity renewing the body through repetition and the imaginary materialization of the post-war body. The relevance and outlook that could be gained from a post-apocalyptic perspective became evident through the capacity of the lens to orchestrate a coherent theory between the state of the body, the necessity of re-definition and the phenomenon of repetition as main artistic strategy.

In the limited time of this research, the notion on the PAB lens and the potential of repetition was only preliminarily mapped out. The first step into this myriad of interpenetrating threads of discourses and theories constitutes by now a dense but still superficial mapping of the rhizomatic web around the PAB. Despite the fact that I was not able to produce a fully articulated functional theory around the PAB, the exploration itself provided a new perspective onto the body and a new image vocabulary to think of body and question its state and potential through the usage of repetition in the theatrical encounter. Furthermore, each exciting path I embarked on resulted in various questions expanding my own view on the field and thus opening many potential lines of future research. I think that developing further any of these paths or their ramifications will make possible a clearer and more functional theory around the PAB lens and its usage tapping deeper into philosophical perception theories and encounters with radical bodies.

In my opinion, it would be very intriguing to explore further the perception of the body in Beckett's plays and deepen the roots of the PAB in post-war theories on how our perception and subjectivity have changed since then. Moreover, expanding the theoretical framework on perception, it would be very productive to dive into cognitive theories on perception and work on designing scientific experiments based on repetition and exhaustion to explore further their impact on the seer. Looking further into theories of perception and philosophical phenomenology will shed more light on the larger systems interpenetrating and creating perception and its link to experience and knowledge. Exploring the link between imagination and reality, and diving into theories on its workings could inform in more details the re-imagination of the body and its link to actual change in the seers' perception. Expanding on the preliminary outline of repetition as generator of speculative thought and new understanding of the body, exploring Kartsaki et al. book *On Repetition: writing, performance & art*, Deleuze's writings in *Repetition and Difference*, and other works I did not have the opportunity to study, will afford an in-depth mapping of their effects and a richer palette of ways to use and analyze them. Finally but certainly not exhaustively, continuing the mythological (Barthes) analysis of the PAB encounter and exploring

the development of a potential performance methodology out of the emerging strands of research could constitute a first step towards an intriguing practical artistic research. Merging theoretical scholarly knowledge, scientific studies on perception and the practical instrumentalization of the research findings could help create performances aiming at the experimentation with compositional strategies as repetition and exhaustion, which ultimately strive for the expansion of knowledge and the search for change.

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Plagiarism Statement

Faculty of Humanities

Version September 2014

PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

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Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity. The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list! If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

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- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
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- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
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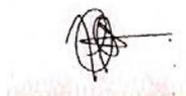
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I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.

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Date and signature: 15 August 2017



ⁱ The body seen through the PAB, is ascribed the features of the apocalypse. It acts as a PAB entity embodying the desire for re-definition

ⁱⁱ As Bleeker nuances, an identification includes an awareness and a critical positioning rather than feeling like a character on stage.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rehearsal of WWS attended on the 24th November 2016 in ICK, Amsterdam.

^{iv} Throughout this paper, the notion of productive implies providing new ways to think about the body, making us ask new or "the right questions" (Kunst), allowing for a different perspective.