DISMANTLING THE SELF: EXPLORING THE INFINITE BECOMINGS IN ORLAN'S BODY OF WORK

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF

COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN

AND THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS

AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Burcu Baykan

May 2010

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

BURCU BAYKAN

_____

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____

Assist. Prof.Dr. Mahmut Mutman (advisor)

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____

Aren Emre Kurtgözü

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____

Assist. Prof. Ercan Sağlam

Approved by the Institute of Fine Arts

_____

Prof. Dr. Bülent Özgüç
Director of the Institute of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

DISMANTLING THE SELF: EXPLORING THE INFINITE BECOMINGS IN ORLAN'S BODY OF WORK

Burcu Baykan
M.A. in Media and Visual Studies
Supervisor: Assistant Professor Dr. Mahmut Mutman
May 2010

This study is an attempt to elaborate the significance of multimedia and performance artist Orlan's body and identity altering practices along the lines of Deleuzian theory, and to explore the points of overlap and resonances between their projects. It focuses on a range of conceptual resources, primarily Deleuze's formulations together with Guattari on 'becoming' to explore the artist's fluid states of being that are always in the process of transition and her body's constantly changing nature as a transformative experience. It also includes their theories of 'rhizome', 'machinic assemblages' and 'body without organs' to provide insights into her work as a form of expanded art practice that enables proliferating connections and collective arrangements, as well as to characterize it as a non-dualistic process that is no longer contingent on binary divisions.

Keywords: Carnal art, body, identity, becoming, rhizome, machinic assemblage, body without organs, Deleuze.

ÖZET

KENDİNİ SÖKMEK:
ORLAN'IN ÇALIŞMALARINDAKİ SONSUZ OLUŞLARI KEŞFETMEK

Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar
Yüksek Lisans
Tez Yöneticisi: Yard. Doç. Dr. Mahmut Mutman
May 2010

Bu çalışma multimedya ve performans sanatçısı Orlan'ın beden ve kimliği değiştiren çalışmalarının Deleuze teorisi doğrultunda önemini inceleme, ve projeleri arasındaki örtüşen noktaları ve rezonansları ortaya çıkarma çabasıdır. Sanatçının daima geçiş süreci içinde olan akışkan varoluş biçimleri ve sürekli değişmekte olan bedenini dönüştürücü bir deneyim olarak ele almak için, başta Deleuze ve Guattari'nin 'oluş' üzerine formulasyonları olmak üzere birtakım kavramsal kaynaklara odaklanır. Bunun yanısıra bu araştırma, Orlan'ın çalışmalarına, çoğalan bağlantılar ve kolektif düzenlemelere olanak tanıyan bir çeşit genişletilmiş sanat uygulaması olarak ışık tutmak, ve bu çalışmaları ikili karşıtlıklara dayanmayan bir süreç olarak karakterize etmek için 'rizom', 'maşinik toplanma' ve 'organsız gövde' teorilerini de içerir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Etsel sanat, beden, kimlik, oluş, rizom, maşinik toplanma, organsız gövde, Deleuze.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Mahmut Mutman for his guidance and encouraging criticisms throughout this study, also for his friendly and intimate attitude towards me. It has been a great pleasure to get to know and collaborate with him. In like manner, this study owes much to the thought-provoking courses of Zafer Aracagök. The experience was priceless. I am indebted to him for enabling me to pursue such a study at the foreign terrains of philosophy. Without the inspiration he gave me to wander in-between areas of art and theory, it would be unthinkable to constitute such a scope and even start this thesis. I would also like to thank my other jury members, Aren Kurtgözü and Assist. Prof. Ercan Sağlam for their valuable comments and suggestions, as well as Assist. Prof. Andreas Treske for his kind patience with me throughout the whole process.

I would like to recall dear friends İrem, Elvan, Eren and my cousin Ece without whose invaluable friendships, it would be impossible to cope with this year of thesis. In their own unique ways, they played a part in this process and managed to be available every time I needed their support and encouragement, no matter how tired or busy they were. I owe special thanks to Murat, without whose persistent support this thesis would simply not be possible.

I wish to thank my non-human friends Vantuzcan, Oğluş and Fıstık who all at various points, kept me company trying to sit on something I was reading or on the keyboard, but without whose company this process would have been a lot less enjoyable.

Last but most, I do not know how to express my sincere gratitude to my parents for their love, continual support, motivation and trust in me. Even at the hardest times, they made me realize what I am capable of.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....iv

ÖZET.....v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....vi

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....viii

LIST OF FIGURES x

1. INTRODUCTION.....**1**

1.1 Aims and Objectives.....1

1.2 Scope and Organization.....19

2. ORLAN'S OUEVRE.....**23**

2.1 Orlan in the Context of Contemporary Body Art.....23

2.2 The Reincarnation of St.Orlan.....29

2.3 Self-Hybridizations and Harlequin's Coat.....65

3. A DELEUZIAN DEBATE ON ORLAN.....**81**

3.1 Debate on The Reincarnation of St.Orlan and Self-Hybridizations Series.....81

3.2 Debate on Harlequin's Coat.....158

4. CONCLUSION: FINAL ANALYSIS.....**167**

REFERENCES.....178

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. Operating-Theatre, July 6, 1991.

Fig. 2. Fourth Surgery-Performance, July 6, 1991.

Fig. 3. First Surgery-Performance, reading *La Robe,* July 1990.

Fig. 4. Fourth Surgery-Performance, July 6, 1991.

Fig. 5. Fifth Surgery-Performance, 1991.

Fig. 6. Fifth Surgery-Performance, 1991.

Fig. 7. Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Fig. 8. Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Fig. 9. Official Portrait, Orlan, www.orlan.net, 2008.

Fig. 10. Close-ups from documentary images and video footage of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan.*

Fig. 11. Close-up of Laughter During the Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Fig. 12. Petit Reliquarie; "This is My Body, This is My Software", soldered metal, burglar-proof glass, 10 grams of Orlan's flesh encased in resin, 30 x 30 x 5 cm, 2001.

Fig. 13. Holy Shroud No. 9, 30 x 40 cm, photographic transfer onto blood-soaked gauze, plexiglas box, 1993.

Fig. 14. Holy Shroud No. 21, 30 x 40 cm, photographic transfer onto blood-soaked gauze, plexiglas box, 1993.

Fig. 15. Blood Drawing 1 , 50 x 60 cm, 1993.

Fig. 16. Blood Drawing 2 , 70 x 100 cm, 1993.

Fig. 17. 'Between Two': Omnipresence Installation at the Centre Georges Pompidou, forty-one metal diptyches and eighty-two color photos, November – December, 1994.

Fig. 18. Self-Hybridations *Précolombiennes*, 1998-2000.

Fig. 19. Self-Hybridations *Africaines,* 2002-2003.

Fig. 20. Self-Hybridations *Amérindiennes*, 2005-2007.

Fig. 21. SymbioticA Laboratory,Australia, 2008.

Fig. 22. *In-Vitro* Cultured Cells, 2008.

Fig. 23. Biopsy, *Harlequin's Coat,* Perth University, Australia, 2007.

Fig. 24. *Harlequin's Coat*, Bioreactor, Videoprojection, Luxembourg, 2009.

Fig. 25. Petri Dishes, *Harlequin's Coat*, 2008.

Fig. 26. Recycled Garments as Upholstery Coverings on Ghost Chairs, 2008.

Fig. 27. *Harlequin's Coat*, Gallery Installation, 2008**.**

Fig. 28. *Harlequin's Coat*, Gallery Space with Audience, 2008.

Fig. 29. Audience with Harlequin-Patterned Slippers, 2008.

Fig. 30. Portrait Produced by the Body-Machine four days after the Surgery-Performance, November 25, 1993.

Fig. 31. *The Second Mouth*, Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Fig. 32. Orlan with her *Self-Hybridizations* Series, 2000.

Fig. 33. Orlan with her *Self-Hybridizations* Series, 2007.

Fig. 34. Close-up of the Opening of the Body During the Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Fig. 35. Orlan, Conference on *Harlequin's Coat*, Ontario College of Art & Design, Toronto, Ontario, September 30, 2008.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and Objectives:

In the visual arts during the mid-1960s, the human body was reintroduced into artistic context through performances, whose practitioners eventually identified themselves as body artists. Body art practices of recent decades made room for profound explorations of the body which has been an artistic medium through which artists expressed their ideas, intentions, concerns and all the other conceptual facets. One of the most remarkable actions that engage the human body in the contemporary art scene is staged by the French multimedia and performance artist Orlan in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, the surgery performance series (1990-1993) which radically altered her face and body, adopting features from figures of Western art history.

Beyond her early work, *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* is probably the most recognized and extensive project Orlan has undertaken, in which she performs while a cosmetic surgeon operates on her. In this controversial series, the artist continued to explore themes present throughout her early performances and photographic pieces, and defy convention by using her body to challenge norms and provoke public debate. Orlan has undergone a series of nine surgeries required for what she envisioned as total self-transformation. As a multi-media conceptual project consisting of

performing, photographing, filming and broadcasting, all of the surgery-performances were part of public display, and carefully designed and choreographed by the artist.

The 'operating-theater' with its carnivalesque atmosphere, involves the use of wild sets and decoration, music, designer costumes worn by Orlan and the surgeons, mixed with background dance-performances and multimedia displays, while the bloody procedure is going on. Orlan chooses to remain conscious under local anesthesia since her conscious participation is essential to the choreographing of her operations (Ince 63). The surgeons are as much performers, helping Orlan execute the operation-performances. She collectivizes artistic creativity also by compelling the viewers into the dynamics of the performance; Orlan speaks to her international audience via live satellite feed and reads philosophical texts and faxes wired to her from around the globe, while being cut open. Altogether there is a poetics of excess in the operating-theater, which makes a weirdly hybrid scene.

In her subsequent series of digital self-portraits entitled *Self-Hybridizations*, (1998-2007) Orlan continues her pursuit to remake herself, this time using computer morphing technology instead of the scalpel to transform the body. Orlan sees this series as a continuation of her surgical work, which is created by digitally combining the images of her surgically altered face with the distorted features of pre-Columbian, American Indian and African sculptures.

Orlan has frequently remarked that she is not against cosmetic surgery but opposed to the "standard criteria of beauty that cosmetic surgery imposes on female and male bodies" ("South Bank Show"). Hence, the artist used cosmetic surgery against its intended purposes, as a means of transformation of oneself. Her intention is not directed toward beautifying her visage, an ideal Orlan herself repeatedly insisted she is not in quest of. Rather, as art critic Barbara Rose puts it, she seeks to expose and interrogate the unacceptable horrible process of cosmetic surgery, in order to bring it into the public discourse and subvert the notion that an ideal beauty could actually exist (123). Much of the serious scholarship on Orlan's performance oeuvre delves into contours of these feminist goals. The scholars specialized in art history or performance arts such as Jill C. O'Bryan, Kate Ince, Barbara Rose and Michelle Hirschhorn explored *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* as seeking to disturb the hegemonic practices of mainstream cosmetic surgery by displaying the "ugly" side of the process and the dominant norms of beauty from male perspective. Although the critique of the essentialized notions of beauty imposed onto the female body in contemporary Western society is one of the most obvious tasks of Orlan's project, her motivation for undertaking these surgeries runs much deeper than that. Orlan, herself considers the feminist aspect "just a fraction of her work" which explores more complex issues regarding human body and identity (qtd in Ayers 180). As a matter of fact, at the heart of Orlan's project is her investigation of conceptions of identity and the self, through her use of the object considered perhaps the most sacred—her own body.

If Orlan's work has any importance, it is, in fact, tied to her problematization of our ideas about the supposedly fixed, fleshy boundaries of the body and our definitions of human as a unified self. Lying on the operating table, with a needle through her lip, Orlan makes her body entirely negotiable and significantly urges us to rethink about our most basic assumptions about the stability of the bodily self. Hence, she appears as the actualization of transformation and change. In that sense, her open-ended transformation of body tissue brought by cosmetic surgery and more recently by digital morphing technology is concerned with breaking free from the fixed categories of logic that normatively promotes bodily integrity and fixed subjectivity. This shift in the parameters of self ultimately encourages thought that defies the dualistic logic of Western thought primarily focused on essences, categories and fixed identities.

Orlan's intimate exploration of her own flesh demonstrates that the body is not a sealed entity with clear delineations between inside and outside, but converted into a malleable and transformable artwork that is ever changing. This experimental attitude towards the body by treating it as a material that could be modelled and remodelled infinitely, seriously disrupts the notion of an essential being with any fixed nature, opens up the possibility to create new forms of existence and subsequently causes a disarticulation of the unified self. It does so "by reopening the body-boundary which must remain closed in order to guarantee the level of repression necessary for the maintenance of organized subjectivity" (O'Bryan 131).

As this discussion has indicated, Orlan's creative investigations into the dynamics of body and subjectivity requires a different formulation from the conventional conceptualization of selves as unified and fixed entities. One promising reconceptualization of the body and the subjectivity for this project is found in the work of Gilles Deleuze. It is my key assumption that Orlan's fluid and shifting states of being; her body which is open to reconfigurations and always in the process of transition propose a different idea of embodiment, one capable of Deleuzian logic of 'becoming'.

Hence, the aim of this thesis is to elaborate on the significance of Orlan's body and identity altering practices along the lines of the contemporary critic and philosopher Gilles Deleuze's thought. Becoming, which forms the basis for much of Deleuze's philosophy, points to a dynamic process of change, thus proves to be valuable as a critical framework for exploring the dynamics of Orlan's practice, by allowing us to consider it as a transformative experience and reconfigure the processual nature of her art, which is herself, defined in contradiction to a self-contained and fixed subject. In terms of identity, Deleuze's philosophy can be seen as a critical attempt to leave behind the traditional notion of the subject with any fixed and essential nature. He, along with his collaborator Félix Guattari, contest the fixed conceptions of 'being' which is separate from the processes of becoming, therefore argue that existence is not static; but is in constant flux. Becomings, in this sense, are processes involving the transformation of self and destabilization of fixed, unified identity based on binary logics. Rosi Braidotti

points out to this dimension of Deleuze's thought that would "favour the destitution of the sovereign subject altogether and consequently the overcoming of the dualism Self/Other" by placing the self in a multiplicity of relations to other forces of life (2001:188), thereby freeing it from any predetermined or coded fixations. Becoming then, "functions as a deterritorializing agency that dislodges the subject from his unified and centralized location" (Braidotti 2001:187) and opens up spaces where enlivening possibilities of life can be actualized by allowing for change and experimentation on multiple levels.

Deleuze's complex body of thought covers a dizzying array of subjects. Yet throughout this wide array of topics, I will remain focused on a range of concepts that I believe overlap with the concerns of Orlan, including his formulations together with Guattari on 'becoming' to explore the ongoing construction of Orlan and her body's constantly changing nature, as well as their theory of 'rhizome' as a radical form of connectivity which destabilizes the binary structures, to provide further insights into her ouevre as a form of expanded art practice that enables proliferating connections and collective arrangements, and to characterize it as a non-dualistic process that is no longer contingent on binary divisions. It is in these respects that, I believe, Orlan's investigation of the instability of her own self-presence with regard to a self/other relationship and her craving for a breakthrough from accepted norms and settled opinions in terms of body and identity require a turning towards the conceptual resources Deleuze provides, whose writings

can itself be positioned as an experiment in thinking differently and overcoming the dualistic framework pervasive in Western thought. With his unique focus on opening up new possibilities in being and new forms of subjectivity, Deleuze allows us more flexibility in transforming ourselves in response to dynamic processes of becoming, that is life.

This thesis also employs a number of complimentary concepts from Deleuze and Guattari including 'machinic assemblages' and 'body without organs' since these concepts relate to the primary notion of becoming and are necessary to make sense of the complexities of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic philosophy. In sum, they are intimately linked together in an attempt to reject prevailing hierarchies and unities, and to overcome the rigid boundaries between binary terms in order to render them more fluid.

Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that becoming is the very dynamic of change; it "produces nothing other than itself" (1987: 238). This idea resonates with Orlan's surgery-performances that likewise value process over result. In her statement defining her performative surgeries as 'Carnal Art', Orlan emphasizes that she "is not interested in its final, plastic result but in the surgical-operation-performance and in the modified body as a site of public debate" ("Carnal Art Manifesto"). Hence, the foreground of her work is the transformative process of modification and production of a continual flow of changes as an exploration of a constantly mutating self, not a fixed, finalized identity.

Although *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* has generated a great deal of criticism and commentary within a wide array of disciplines, Deleuzian debate over Orlan's work, I believe, is a framework that was not dwelled on thoroughly before. Arguments resound with his focus on unstable and decentered subject permeate analysis of Orlan's body of work, yet few scholars give Deleuze more than passing mention. When discussing Orlan's surgery-performances, they often acknowledge the transformative and processual nature of her work and express their personal arguments in a way that echoes the 'constant becoming' Deleuze describes. According to O'Bryan, for example, a critical part of Orlan's project, is its artful circumvention of the fixity of identity that remains in a constant change. She suggests, Orlan is "making her body something in the process of coming about all times" (55) which keeps possibilities open and "challenging the boundaries of identity itself" (77).

Deleuze in his single authored works as well as his collaborations with Guattari in their two central texts, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, is rigorously critical of all self-bounded forms with internal, autonomous structures that have no connections to the outside, therefore insists that self and subjectivity ceaselessly take on new dimensions through multiple connections and interrelations with other bodies and the world. What he proposes then, is a radically unstable, contingent and open-ended subject that is defined "on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes" (1983: 20).

Considering this continual involvement with the outside in a dynamic mobility, Deleuze and Guattari develop a provocative and unconventional reformulation of the body as 'assemblage'. For them, the body is not an organically determined, static entity, rather a dynamic realm which extends beyond its boundaries to form convergences and alliances with other bodies, in processes of becoming.

In her discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's body as assemblage, philosopher and gender theorist Elizabeth Grosz notes that the body is radically reconfigured:

> in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, the transformations and becomings it undergoes, and the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, how it can proliferate its capacities. (1994: 165)

This kind of theorization entails a certain overcoming of self/other binary logic since the body is always defined in its relations and interactions with other bodies and its milieu. This ultimately opens up novel and more intense ways of being in the world beyond ordinary experience and self-involved life-forms, which can also be expressed in art. Deleuze, therefore, challenges totalizing structures of any kind such as the concept of autonomous, unitary entities for they delimit the vital possibilities that can be actualized with respect to other bodies through becomings, hence the very power of life for change and creation.

Deleuze and Guattari's radical reconfiguration of the body and compelling account of subjectivity in terms of becomings and open-ended approach to

the outside, along with their emphasis on decentered forms, prove inspirational for this investigation since Orlan's body is closely aligned with Deleuzian approach to the body in its declared purpose to exceed its static unity and become a collective site of interactions. Orlan's surgical opening of her body brings her into continuity with other bodies by becoming permeable to outside, and in doing so, increases her bodily potentialities and capabilities. Seeking an alternative to the view that envisages the body as sealed off, "singular, organised, self-contained, organic body" (Grosz 1994: 172) without points of linkage to the outside world, Orlan performs a body that is made and remade by always spreading, shifting, expanding into other territories, linking to other bodies, ideas, technologies, spaces in a multiplicity of connections, which are essentially in movement. As "a body that becomes both subject and object of endless combinations" (Viola 41), in the effects of the external forces she engages with, Orlan's body is open and vitally linked into the world. Therefore, I will explore the possibilities of conceiving of her perpetual transformations and self-creation in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* along with her more recent *Self-Hybridizations* series, which resist fixed categories of logic, as the actualization of the Deleuzian conception of self that is only defined by its connections to the outside.

Furthermore, both series may be viewed as a contribution to Deleuze's theories of identity, as they involve a disintegration of the autonomous, bounded self and propose an identity that is transitory, de-centered, multiple and fundamentally unfixable, the qualities that typify the writings of

Deleuze. One might add that both projects open up possibilities between the self and the other by rendering their polarized oppositions obsolete. Seen in these terms, I see Orlan's complex body project as emphasizing the enlivening potentialities available, both in artistic sense and ontologically, once the usual conceptual barriers associated with the logic of binary thinking is evaded.

Closely tied to the notion of becoming is that of the rhizome; a radical form of connectivity that is generated through processes of becoming. Writing with Guattari, Deleuze puts forward the concept of rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus*, as a connective and affirmative practice that provides a multitude of possibilities to link everything in a potentially infinite variety of non-linear paths, in an attempt to pluralize knowledge, to produce new ways for creative thinking and to replace the traditional modes of classification and the binary logics that have dominated Western thought. (1987: 16) The rhizome allows for a more fluid existence by fostering complex encounters and connections often between the most disparate forms; milieus, ideas, practices that are usually thought as discrete; forming an assemblage. As "a politics of creativity" Bogue remarks, this mobile concept of thought "is based neither on beginnings nor on ends but on middles – interregnums, intermezzos, the space in between, the unpredictable interstices of process, movement and invention" (105). This mode of existence in the intermediary space allows a vision in which dualisms that would fix positions do not exist. This space of in-between rhizome occupies, rather affirms binary terms

without excluding the one from the other and enables the construction of assemblages that are the heterogeneous arrangements of seemingly divergent elements, distinct spheres or different forms of life brought together: "…a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling, of bodies reacting to one another" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 88-9).

Making connections and linkages between different fields of forces appears as the core element in Orlan's work. Therefore, it is my contention that Deleuze and Guattari's formulations of rhizome and assemblage in terms of open-ended formations that ceaselessly connect elements, provide a powerful theorization to articulate Orlan's body of work, capable of forming diversifying connections with larger milieus and proliferating arrangements in a continuous variation without yielding to a unified, stable centre. By opening herself up to tactical alliances between different ideas, disciplines, domains and bodies such as art, science, medicine, biotechnology, communications media, fashion, surgeons and spectators that rarely converse with each other in such an intense manner, Orlan goes beyond traditional definitions and categorizations. This turn away from a certain kind of autonomy to an affirmation of collective enunciation through an interactive multidisciplinary approach, produces new lines of variation and aligns her with Deleuzian rhizomatic thought. In the forthcoming chapters, I will attempt to map the rhizomatic nature of Orlan's body of work, by articulating which connections and linkages are forged, how assemblages are

constructed through such linkages among bodies, how components operate within these assemblages and ultimately what kind of a body is enacted in the meetings and exchanges within these practices.

Disrupting dualisms is a central aspect that makes up *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and *Self-Hybridizations*. While several scholars have noted, before me, the binary crossing nature of Orlan's ouevre, I will assert that Orlan's body of work which always situates itself outside the binary structures surrounding art, technology, medicine, and personal identity, in fact operates within the non-binary, intermediary space of Deleuzian rhizomes. O'Bryan, for example, notes that: "Binaries that become unleashed from Orlan's work are subject/object, male/female, self/other, natural/unnatural, interior/exterior, beauty/the monstrous, art/medicine and so on…" (116). Indeed, Orlan's entire work conveys an understanding that resists the dictates of social mechanisms and hierarchical structures that impose particular limitations on the body in terms of dualities that divide man from woman, beautiful from grotesque, human from non-human, real from virtual, natural from artificial, instead it consists of exchanges and linkages between apparently contradictory concepts, themes and perspectives in order to create a fluid existence. These connections are crucial in understanding the exact nature of *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and *Self-Hybridizations,* and point toward the construction of Deleuzian rhizomatic networks. In that sense, Orlan allows a vision in which contrasting and disjointed terms co-exist together without letting her art become

predetermined by exclusive alternative between binaries. This kind of strategy: "to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo" (1987: 277), as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is the only way to get outside the dualistic logic.

The way Orlan makes creative use of all forms of technology to compose her art, signals boundary-breaking encounters between real and the synthetic, and otherness, therefore turns her corporeal subjectivity into an unsealed entity constituted by complexifying encounters, diverse arrangements and all manners of becoming between organic, inorganic, technical, social, natural, artificial materials and/or bodies. This is a body that is always "incorporating and incorporated" (Ross qtd in Jones 229). This strategy of opening up herself to exteriority therefore to 'othernesses' taken from other bodies, posits Orlan's oeuvre of artistic work in-between milieu of the diverse possibilities, in the non-binary space when different realms of experience commingle, (human/ non-human/ animal/ machinic/ organic/ inorganic/ real/ digital/ figuration/ disfiguration) which characterizes the intermediary space of rhizome.

Orlan's selfhood, then, is reconfigured as a heterogeneous and collective site of seemingly distant terms that are made to resonate with one another. It is in this regard that, I will explore the possibilities of her body's potential to realize the dynamic field of Deleuzian assemblage composed of heterogeneous mix of elements and rhizomatically linked with other bodies.

This recalls immediately Deleuze and Guattari's 'body without organs', the final conception I would like to introduce here, which appears to constitute a particularly illuminating framework for conceptualizing this kind of body, that is placed in direct relations with other bodies and connected up into assemblages, once its sovereign mode of organization is ruptured. Deleuze and Guattari, as it is shown by their attack "on the organic organization of the organs" (1987: 158), advocate instead the construction of body without organs, in short 'BwO'. BwO then, entails dismantling of the organized body as a unified, integrated whole and considering it in its exteriority, open to multiple linkages with other bodies. It entails, "opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage…" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 160). Not agreeing to the fixed boundaries of her flesh, I argue that Orlan operates with the same revelatory intent to dismantle the organism. For that reason, I will read the body of Orlan as an artistic expression of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of BwO, imbued with enlivening potentialities, and will explore her construction of BwO as an attempt to liberate from the confining organization of the self that allows new assemblages to emerge.

This collectivity of connections renders Orlan's art, which is herself, unnatural, indeterminate, transitory but ultimately transformative. Art of this kind may be productively articulated by Deleuzian terms because of his proposal to expand the array of human interaction through his theoretical formulation of "becoming-other". In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and

Guattari assert that aesthetic becoming is "the act through which something or someone ceaselessly becomes-other" (1994: 177). All becomings, in that sense, involve otherness, they "inevitably and necessarily move into the direction of the 'others' of classical dualism" (Braidotti in Parr 303). Orlan's project portrays a move away from predetermined and fixed parameters of existence towards a more fluid and intense form of living in an ever ongoing dynamic process. All these becomings seem to be inspired by the idea of openness, the desire to move and experience something beyond oneself, by extending toward the territory of the 'other'. Orlan expresses this attitude as: "by wanting to become another, I become myself" (qtd in Davis 29). Therefore, I will attempt to demonstrate how Orlan performs a general process of becoming, one that involves the notion of becoming-other, by disrupting the allegedly discrete, self-sustaining individual and performing the collision of self/other binary.

I will also turn to Deleuze's oeuvre on the art of English painter Francis Bacon; *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, in order to offer further insight into how his paintings provide creative visual correlates of Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions of BwO and becoming-other, particularly becoming-animal. Although they work on different mediums, there are some striking resonances between some of Deleuze's approach to Bacon's paintings which undo the fixed codes of the body through metamorphic figures, and Orlan's malleable, unformed flesh during her surgical performances. Therefore, a brief consideration of the way Deleuze connects Bacon's art to his own way

of philosophizing may suggest how we can extend these becomings and BwOs beyond the field of painting, to elucidate Orlan's surgical practice. In other words, I will try to map out the set of relations between the raw bloody matter in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and Deleuze's view of art through Bacon's images. I will argue that in a similar fashion to Bacon's art, where recognizable forms are disrupted, shapes lose their determinacy and flesh or meat emerges from the human form, Orlan's body, the moment the scalpel cuts its well-defined contours, becomes captured in a web of becomings and BwO. Her fluid states of transformation break with the conventional organization of an embodied subject and pose the possibility of releasing new forms of life. This, in turn, could be construed as the kind of zones of indetermination "hovering between the animal and the human, between the earth and territory, that Deleuze has claimed is the basis of all the arts" (Grosz 2008: 100).

When analyzing Orlan's performative surgeries, it is critical to realize that her art emerges out of a long tradition in body art. 1960s and '70s body artists were preoccupied with body as an artistic medium with diverse interests, as precursors to Orlan's work. A remarkable number of these body performance works have involved violent acts against the body. While there was an emphasis on glorifying bodily pain and desire to suffer in the works of previous body artists, as Rose details, Orlan purposefully breaks with their theorization and celebration of pain, and calls her art Carnal Art specifically to differentiate it from the tradition of body art, although she acknowledges

common sources (101). In relation to this Orlan remarks: "Contrary to Body Art, which is a different matter altogether, Carnal Art does not desire pain, it does not seek pain as a source of purification, does not conceive of it as a redemption" ("Carnal Art Manifesto"). Although her performances seem painful, local anesthetics and other related analgesics provide her with a numb body and allows her to be conscious, so that she can perform as being operated on, unlike the artists who suffer for their work.

Furthermore, in distinction to earlier body art practices in which personal risk, self-harm and physical danger were often important components, Orlan does not merely use the body in spontaneous, short-term, high-risk performances, rather her performative surgeries have a processual nature in a long time span, and involve gradual changes of her body to affect and transform identity. Additionally, Orlan is working in a multi-disciplinary context and defines herself above all as an "interdisciplinary and/or pluridisciplinary multimedia artist" (qtd in Buci-Glucksmann and Blistene 240). In that sense, not only has she extended body art, but her Carnal Art celebrates contemporary technology and advances in medicine and science to liberate the body from its physical confinement as well as to open up new spaces for prolific encounters with other domains.

As a continuation of her Carnal Art, Orlan is currently working on a project called *Harlequin's Coat*, which is staged as a large-scale multi-media installation. Using the most advanced features of biogenetics and

biotechnology, cultures of cells obtained by further surgeries from the artist's skin are currently being mixed with these of various ethnicities and animals of diverse origins. (Orlan 2008: 87) The long-term aim is to obtain scraps of skin of assorted appearances, *Harlequin's Coat*, which is a metaphor for contemporary crossbreeding, with his multi-colored, patchwork costume composed of different fabrics of different origins, as described in 'Laicité', the preface to *Le tiers-instruit*, a philosophical work by Michel Serres. According to Orlan's own account, this metaphor "conveys the idea of multiculturalism and the acceptance of other within oneself" (2008: 87). *Harlequin's Coat*, as a composite biotechnological garment, will be garnished with these skin cultures and it will be the central part of the current installation. With this ongoing project, Orlan pursues an experimental method by opening up her art to complexifying encounters between different realities; biogenetics, philosophy, design, fashion as well as different human races, other species, and carnal medium of skin cells, thereby encourages us to realize the potential of broader collective assemblages and further becomings, in favor of new life forms and other possible worlds.

1.2 Scope and Organization:

This thesis will primarily focus on the French multimedia and performance artist Orlan's surgery-performance series, entitled *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and her subsequent series of digital self-portraits; *Self-Hybridizations*. The artist's most recent work, *Harlequin's Coat* will also be briefly taken into

account, since Orlan sees this large-scale installation as a continuation of her Carnal Art.

The main intention of this thesis is to explore, via Gilles Deleuze, Orlan's selected works, with the purpose of producing new thoughts and developing new ways of addressing her work. Throughout this thesis, I will turn to single authored works of Deleuze as well as his collaborations with the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari. Deleuze's philosophy is about connections. Likewise, this thesis is hoped to operate within this logic, to think through the possibilities of conceptualizing the ways in which Orlan's creative practice and some of Deleuze's conceptual resources can be linked together and rethought, and to produce connections and compatibilities between them, precisely to be consistent with Deleuze's thought.

This thesis does not serve to contextualize Orlan's work within feminist politics in order not to lose the focus. While I shall briefly address the issues related to feminine beauty, focusing more directly on the feminist debate about the artist's oeuvre and develop a conception of her complex body project within the framework of feminist scholarship is beyond the scope of this thesis. Deleuze is comparatively under-theorized in the critical writings on Orlan, therefore, instead of reproducing the feminist debates that have been explored before thoroughly, I shall approach Orlan's selected works along with the former readings on her oeuvre, in order to construct my own account of her work that might elucidate through Deleuze and Guattari's

transformative theories. This makes multiple analysis, and hopefully, new insights possible.

Following introduction, the second chapter begins with providing a brief background and the characteristics of performance based body art of the 1960s and 1970s that influenced Orlan's surgical performances. Body-oriented work of Orlan is both linked to earlier body art practices and distinct from them in its strategies, intentions and motivations. In the light of this brief examination, I will attempt to demonstrate Orlan's unique place and her contribution to the contemporary body art, along with her rejection to belong to this tradition. It is certainly not my intention to provide an extensive historical account of body art, or to explore all these body artists one by one. Such an attempt will exceed the limits of this work. In this sense, what I intend to provide is an approach that aims at a general view of the tradition of body art.

The second and third sections of the second chapter are devoted to an extensive inquiry of Orlan's oeuvre. The second section is an in-depth investigation into the objectives, themes and meanings of Carnal Art, and includes a detailed description of her surgery-performances which deal explicitly with issues regarding human body and identity. In the third section, I will further my discussion on the *Self-Hybridizations* series which is a complementary body of work to *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*. These computer-generated self-portraits again deal with the body and its

modification, and explore similar themes such as beauty and identity. The section will also sketch a brief picture of the project Orlan is currently working on, *Harlequin's Coat*, in which she continues her previous investigations of disrupting the integrity of the body, using the most advanced features of biogenetics and biotechnology.

Once having put her ouevre's details, the third chapter aims at a comprehensive discussion of Orlan's body of work in relation to Deleuze's theory. It will involve a working through of the theoretical tools provided by Deleuze, along with Guattari, in so far as this allows to pursue the central objective of this study: to bring Deleuze's thought into contact with Orlan's art and to explore the points of overlap and resonances between their projects. I will attempt to show how Orlan opens onto new possibilities by her body-oriented practices and how this aesthetic resonates with the transformative theories developed in Deleuze and Guattari's work. In other words, I will put into question the possibility of Orlan's ouevre within Deleuzian context. By the end of this chapter, a comprehensive correlation is aimed to be achieved between the selected conceptual resources of Deleuze and Orlan's work.

The last chapter concludes the discussion of Orlan's ouevre of artistic act within the Deleuzian context by a final analysis.

CHAPTER 2. ORLAN'S OUEVRE

2.1 Orlan in the Context of Contemporary Body Art:

When analyzing Orlan's performative surgeries, it is critical to realize that her art grows out of a long tradition in body art. The genre of body art emerged into the visual art scene in the mid-1960s and took place through performances, during which the artists engaged with their own bodies. 1960s and '70s body artists were preoccupied with body as an artistic medium with diverse interests, intentions and concerns, as precursors to Orlan's work. Victoria Pitts, a scholar in the politics of body modification, analyzes their shared concern as positioning the body as a site of exploration, criticism of society's disciplinary apparatuses and new possibilities for gender and sexuality, as well as personal, cultural and political expression. (7-14) "Instead of an object of social control by patriarchy, medicine or religion", they regarded the body, Pitt argues, "as a space for exploring identity, experiencing pleasure, and establishing bonds to others" (7-8).

This brief background of performance based body art indicates that Orlan is not creating art that is entirely new, and the foundation of her work is not detached from the tradition of body art. Since the 1960s and '70s body artists were the first contemporary artists to physically use their own bodies in their performances, Orlan accepts them as her most direct precursors. However,

while her body-oriented work is linked to earlier body art practices, the artist separates herself from many of the strategies and aspirations of her 1960s and '70s predecessors, as I shall reveal in detail in the forthcoming discussion.

This early generation of body artists during the 1960s and '70s included such figures as Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, Marina Abramovic, Hannah Wilke, Carolee Schneemann in the United States, Piero Manzoni, Valie Export and the Vienna Actionists in Europe. Jill O'Bryan situates Orlan in the context of body art, citing the Viennese Actionists, Carolee Schneemann and Valie Export specifically, who placed their bodies at the center of their performances, in order to demonstrate the artist's influences and predecessors. (27)

The Vienna Actionists collective (1962-72) which included Hermann Nitsch, Otto Muehl, Rudolph Schwarzkogler and Gunter Brus, treated the body with brutal ritualistic acts and dramatized scenes of violence and bodily abuse, to resist the dogmas and the social institutions of the time. Seeking to construct shocking and expressive performances of ritual blood sacrifices, they tortured and mutilated the body. (O'Bryan 27) However, there is a significant difference between the Viennese actions and Orlan's performances: The Actionists never inflicted actual damage upon their bodies. Their shocking actions of body mutilation and blood sacrifice were characterized by "theatrical fakery" (Rose 9). Ritual performances and scenes of violence of

Actionists were staged, hence they remained fictional and did not actually modify the body. Orlan's surgery-performances are real on the other hand, and are the acts of permanent physical alteration.

Other body performance works became far more real as artists such as Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Carolee Schneemann and Gina Pane inflicted real violent acts against their bodies and did themselves actual physical harm with the theme of painful liberation from social constraints and disruption of conventional notions related to the body. They used self-wounding and subjected their bodies to risky acts and real pain, in an effort to explore the limits of their endurance, to push corporeality toward its own boundaries, as well as to communicate their cultural and political concerns. (Allain and Harvie 134-5) This way, these practitioners of body art hoped their violent performances and deliberate physical suffering would challenge societal norms and instill social change.

While there was an emphasis on glorifying bodily pain and desire to suffer in the tradition of body art, as Barbara Rose details, Orlan purposefully breaks with their theorization and celebration of pain, and calls her art Carnal Art specifically to differentiate it from the tradition of body art, although she acknowledges common sources. (101) In relation to this, Orlan defines her Carnal Art as follows:

> Lying between disfiguration and figuration, it is an inscription in flesh… Contrary to Body Art, which is a different matter altogether, Carnal Art does not desire pain, it does not seek pain as a source of purification, does not conceive of it as a redemption. ("Carnal Art Manifesto")

As can be derived from this quotation, despite her connections to the body artists, Orlan's use of pain runs against the use of pain in the tradition of body art and sets her work far removed from the approach of her colleagues in body art, who use pain to stress their artistic credibility. Orlan practices a form of self-alteration or mutilation, but rejects the body artists' self-inflicted violence; she disavows any redemptive meaning of pain and refuses to suffer. Although her performances seem painful, local anesthetics, epidurals and other related analgesics provide her with a numb body and allow her to be conscious, so that she can perform as being operated on, unlike the artists who suffer for their work. Understood from this perspective, it is crucial in fact to see that, with Carnal Art, Orlan goes beyond the themes in body art as we understand them.

Orlan's anesthetized, smiling, laughing, flayed body and her calm rationality are integral to her surgery-performances and are the exact opposites of pain. In fact, while as spectators we feel for her, Orlan appears to experience none of the suffering which we think she goes through. The artist herself admits feeling only mild discomfort throughout the operations. In fact, her actions rather imply happiness and pleasure. By adopting a strategy based on the "pleasure body" Orlan explains: "All my work runs counter to pain, it resolves round pleasure, the joy of living" (qtd in Viola 87).

Furthermore, in distinction to earlier body art practices in which personal risk, self-harm and physical danger were often important components, Orlan

does not merely use the body in spontaneous, short-term and high-risk performances, rather her entire project is well organized and executed after detailed planning, and is the result of a very complex process. The artist's series of surgery-performances have a processual nature in a long time span, with intervals of varying lengths between them. The idea that art is a process is important for Orlan, which could be another reason to consider her Carnal Art apart from the body art. (Glucksmann and Blistene 239) As a matter of fact, the meaning of Orlan's work lies in this process; a process of self-alteration which results in a highly flexible or metamorphic self. In addition to this, Orlan is the direct result of her performances; she turns her body literally into the art object itself as a "site of public debate" by refashioning her actual physical being ("Carnal Art Manifesto").

Orlan's multi-media surgical project, along with her more recent digital works, involve gradual changes of her body to affect and transform identity. Due to the continuous operations on her body, her own face and body are drastically altered in flux, and her artistic personae is revealed in continuous process and transformation. It appears logical to conclude from this that Orlan does not radicalize body art by using her own body as an artistic material, but using her body as a medium of transformation. In fact, it is this transformation of experience and understanding of subjectivity, along with her quest for continuous process of renewal, that make her body-oriented practice unique in the contemporary body art scene. The critic August Ruhs underlines these aspects of Orlan's work as follows:

> Orlan irreversibly alters her physical and social identity - she literally sacrifices it to art through plastic surgery, so that she transcends the limits of traditional body art in an unprecedented way - hardly any other artist achieves this aim as radically as she does. (46)

Another key factor that differentiates Orlan's work is that, up to Carnal Art, surgery was not used by body artists. Regarding her artistic self-creation via plastic surgery, Orlan has said: "I am the first artist to use surgery as a medium and to alter the purpose of cosmetic surgery…" (1998: 324).

The fact that Orlan is working in a multi-disciplinary context and defines herself above all as an "interdisciplinary and/or pluridisciplinary multimedia artist" (qtd in Buci-Glucksmann and Blistene 240), is another critical aspect that establishes distinctions between her practice and the work of the 1960s and 1970s generation of body artists. Orlan's multi-layered work integrates different disciplines; art, medicine, biotechnology, prosthetic technologies and communications media. While her primary medium is her body, Orlan's Carnal Art projects, whether digital or material, incorporate all kinds of media, ranging from performance and video to photography, installations and electronic music to computer graphics. In stressing this notion, Kate Ince remarks that:

> While the main achievement of body artists of the 1960s and 1970s was to discover the body as material for representation, carnal art of 1990s enters into dialogue with scientific and technological advance…Orlan is an artist of her age, using up-to–the-minute technology and media. (54)

In that sense, not only has she extended body art, but Orlan's Carnal Art celebrates contemporary technology and explores the possibilities of body transformation through the advances in medicine, science and multiple

technologies to liberate the body from its physical confinement and extend its freedom. With the use of advanced techniques in local anesthesia such as modern painkillers and spinal anesthetic injections, Orlan was able to resist pain so that she could direct and choreograph the actions throughout the procedure, as well as to minimize physical pain in the recovery process.

Seen in these terms, Orlan's interdisciplinary body of work which opens up new spaces for productive crossovers with other domains, demonstrates the complexity in her project and proves to have a much more radical approach when compared to the performances of former body artists.

2.2 The Reincarnation of St. Orlan:

A woman lies on the operating table, wearing a bright red lipstick and heavy eye makeup. The hair framing her face is white on one side, blue on the other, and she wears a black Issey Miyake dress with a corset over her dress. The woman is awake, with the contours of her flesh are traced by lines and prepared for impending incisions: blue circles over her cheek bones, dotted lines at the corners of her lips, curves along the folds of her nose. Her gaze remains alert and fixed on us while a surgeon, also dressed in flashy silver, inserts an anesthetic injection with a long, fine needle into her spine, then slices into the skin around her lips following the lines he has marked on her flesh. Blood spills over the scene. Bare breast, splayed legs, lying in a reclining pose, surgeon's scalpel moves under her skin and traverses its well-

defined contours. As the skin is peeled away from her face and laid across her nose, a tube is inserted into a fleshly hole under the chin to separate the skin from the flesh. The camera shows the red bloody mass obscuring her lips, as she smiles and keeps talking. The woman is the French multimedia and performance artist Orlan, and this striking, unsettling spectacle of bloody procedure is *Successful Operation*, the fourth in Orlan's series of nine surgery-performances.

Orlan, whose work is not easily assimilated into prior categories, was born in France in 1947. She began her artistic career when she was a teenager in the early 1960s. As Kate Ince reveals, at the age of 15, the artist whose real name remains a mystery, renamed herself as Orlan, rather than respecting the name she was given. According to Ince, her adoption of the name Orlan, evokes allusions to Orlon, the synthetic fibre. (1)

Orlan has explored body art in many forms during her career. *The Reincarnation of St.Orlan*, while arguably the most controversial of her art, is not detached and grows out of themes from her past work of thirty years of performance, multi-media installations and photographic pieces. As a matter of fact, the series of surgery performances is a continuation of the artist's commitment in using her body to challenge established taste and norms, defy convention and provoke audience reactions and debate. Carey Lovelace, an expert in performance and art, provides the most thorough explanation of Orlan's career by indicating that, as a visual artist Orlan has explored models

of body knowledge that sought to unsettle the rigidity of gender binaries and the traditional roles relegated to women, thus challenged social expectations of conformist behavior since her earliest performances. (18-19) In 1970s and '80s, the artist engaged in performances that aimed for the eradication of social dualisms, namely the prescribed roles of masculinity and femininity, and began to satirize the restrictive virgin/whore binary. Placing the body at the center of her performances, the themes of femininity, beauty, renewal and identity have been present in Orlan's ouevre from the onset of her career, in ways that have pushed the boundaries of art to the extremes. Orlan summarizes this attitude as: "I have always regarded my female body, my artist's body as a particularly suitable material for the production of my work" (qtd in Zimmermann 28). Having begun with some attacks at the level of the image, Orlan has taken this exploration of her body to a new and more radical level with her surgery-performance series of the 1990s. Hence, this section primarily focuses on Orlan's most extensive and controversial project, her series of self-transformational surgical operations entitled *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* that began in 1990.

In *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* (1990-1993), during which the operating room became her performance space and her own flesh the artistic material, Orlan employed cosmetic surgery for the first time as an art form, and has undergone a series of nine surgeries required for what she envisioned as total self-transformation by appropriating the facial features of five Western art-historical beauties. As a multi-media conceptual project consisting of

performing, photographing, filming and broadcasting, all of the surgery-performances were part of public display and carefully designed and choreographed by the artist. Orlan insists to remain conscious under local anesthesia since her conscious participation is essential to the choreographing and orchestrating her operations (Ince 63), which involve interactive communication with an international audience.



Fig. 1. Operating-Theatre, July 6, 1991.

The operating room features the use of wild sets and decoration, music, dance, poetry and outlandish designer costumes worn by Orlan and the surgical staff, mixed with background dance-performances and multimedia displays, while the bloody procedure is going on. Orlan also places billboards, enlarged reproductions of the relevant details from the paintings of art history and random images such as lobster-with-crucifix, skulls, plastic

flowers and fruits to create the environment for her performance space, which she calls "operating-theatre." The mix of these combinations mutates into a dynamic event and the resulting atmosphere is a "bloody but celebratory carnivalesque scene" (Augsburg 305). Orlan herself speaks of the carnivalesque as an integral part of her work, stating that:

> Carnal Art loves the baroque and parody, the grotesque and free-form because Carnal Art is opposed to social pressures that exert themselves as much on the human body as on the body of artworks. Carnal Art is anti-formalist and anti-conformist. (1998: 327)

Altogether there is a poetics of excess, energy and play in the operating-theatre, which makes a weirdly hybrid scene.



Fig. 2. Fourth Surgery-Performance, July 6, 1991.

Every step in Orlan's transformation is transmitted and shared via various mediums of communications technology. The operation theatre houses

phones, fax machines, video cameras and broadcasting equipment, all of which enable her to interact with the audience in art galleries around the globe during her surgery. (O'Bryan, 17) Orlan, who is only locally anesthetized, collectivizes artistic creativity by compelling the viewers into the dynamics of the performance; she invites those audiences to speak to her via satellite and real-time video stream on the net, to fax and email their questions, which she responds while being cut open. In this sense, by being connected to wider communication systems, Orlan's bloody surgical theatre becomes a wider social practice.

The idea of turning surgical operations into performance art came to Orlan's mind when she was operated on for an extrauterine pregnancy under a local anesthetic, which allowed her to experience herself as both detached observer as well as patient. (Rose 5) While participating in a performance art symposium in Lyon in 1979, Orlan was rushed to the hospital due to her medical condition. She decided to take advantage of the opportunity by turning the situation on itself and requested local anesthesia and a camera crew to document the surgery. She then submitted the footage to the conference as if it had been a planned performance. In relation to this experience Orlan remarks:

> Being operated on is not frivolous; the experience was very intense: I was certain that one day somehow, I would work again with surgery… I wanted to take up again these tropes and ingredients of my work to elaborate a performance without being fake to myself, a performance in continuity with previous steps and approaches… a performance facing the future, using up-to-date techniques. (1998: 317)

The experience of witnessing her body while being opened clearly inspired Orlan's future use of surgery for artistic re-creation of herself.

The entire project of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* takes place over an extended period of time, spanning from 1990 to 1993. Each of Orlan's operations was designed to alter a specific feature and has a theme, including: "Carnal Art," "This is My Body, This is My Software," "I Have Given My Body to Art," and "Identity Alterity" (Davis 26). While most of the operations are carried out on her face, they are not solely focused on the face. Based on the removal (incision, cutting, extracting and reduction) and addition (implanting, injection, suture), the series of transformations and radical disfigurings/refigurings of her body include facial modification, implementation of prosthetic and silicone implants, liposuction from the thighs and reshaping of her ankles, knees, hips, waist and neck. (O'Bryan 15)

The first four operations of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* took place in 1990, the fifth in 1991, and the sixth to the ninth in 1993. The first surgery took place in Paris and was entitled *Art Charnel*. After Orlan is given a spinal anesthesia, the surgeon Dr. Cherif Kamel Zahar performed liposuction on Orlan's face and thighs to remove fat in order to produce reliquaries. This first operation featured haute couture gowns for the medical team designed by Paco Rabane. In the second surgery, called *Unicorn Operation*, which took place only six days later, Dr. Cherif Kamel Zaar "protested the excessive decor and documentary equipment in the first surgery" (O'Bryan 15), so the

artist's technical crew was reduced to only one photographer, and a prosthesis implantation was inserted into Orlan's chin. The third operation involved liposuction of legs, ankles and retouching her face and eyelids. This third performance became increasingly problematic since Dr. Zaar insisted that Orlan receive general anesthesia rather than a local one. Due to these conflicts, Dr. Zaar was replaced in the fourth operation. (O'Bryan 15)



Fig. 3. First Surgery-Performance, reading *La Robe,* July 1990.



Fig. 4. Fourth Surgery-Performance, July 6, 1991.



Fig.5. Fifth Surgery-Performance, 1991.



Fig.6. Fifth Surgery-Performance, 1991.

In the fourth surgery-performance, entitled *Successful Operation*, Paco Rabanne designed lavish clothes for the occasion. During the operation, Orlan's lips were embellished and a liposuction was carried out to collect blood and body fat for reliquaries. The fifth surgery-performance was *The Cloak of Harlequin*, in which Orlan wore a multi-colored strapless cloak by Frank Sorbier and a flamboyant harlequin hat she designed herself. The fat from Orlan's thighs and feet was once again removed and placed into sellable reliquaries to finance her subsequent operations. Jimmy Blanche, a black male actor and dancer, performed a striptease while she undertook surgery. In 1992, she returned to the operating room to perform the sixth operation *Sacrifice* that was held during a performance festival in Liege. The operating theatre was adorned with skulls and Orlan received liposuction from the face and abdomen, as she read passages from Antonin Artaud's *To Have Done With the Judgement of God.*

The seventh performance *Omnipresence* which took place in New York in 1993, was the most significant of all the surgery-performances because of its omnipresent and more radical nature. Decors adorning the room included various clocks marking different time zones; Tokyo, Toronto, Paris, New York. New York City's operation seven was;

> filmed for CBS News and broadcast live to the Sandra Gering Gallery in New York; the McLuhan center in Toronto, Ontario; the Banff Center in Banff, Alberta; and the Center Pompidou in Paris, where the watching scholars were also filmed as they uncomfortably reacted to the performance. (O'Bryan 16)

With satellite, real time communication, fax and videophone, the audiences of gallery visitors interacted with the fully conscious artist throughout the entire procedure. The worldwide broadcasting enabled Orlan's omnipresent existence in a multiplicity of locations, and exemplified the communication and sociality opened by her work.

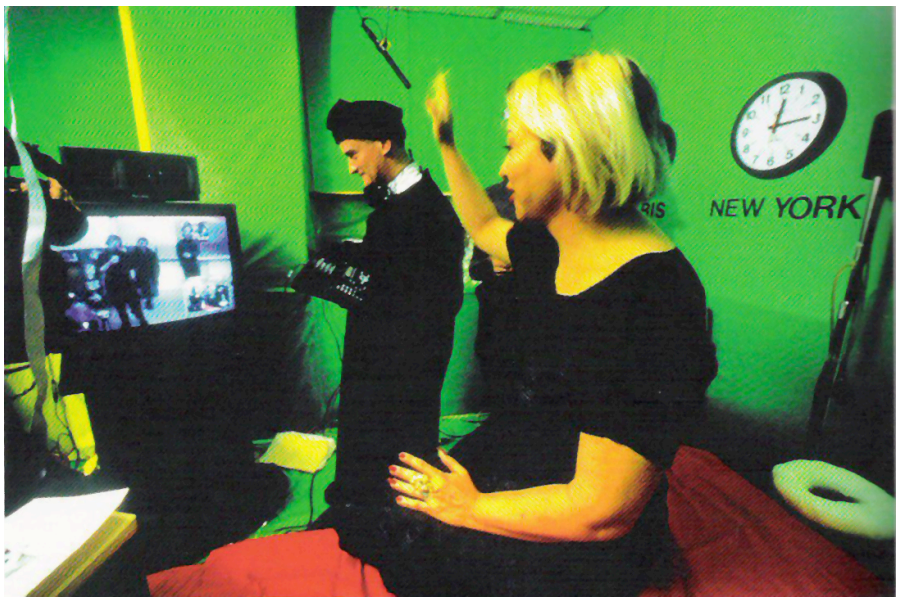


Fig. 7. Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.



Fig. 8. Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

The *Omnipresence,* along with the last two surgeries, were performed by feminist surgeon, Dr. Marjorie Cramer who "fully subscribed to the artistic and feminist aims of Orlan's project" (Schultz-Touge 130). Dr. Cramer entirely understood the conceptual nature of Orlan's project and believed that what Orlan is doing is "actually a piece of body art, an incredibly complicated and sophisticated theatre" (Cramer qtd in Biehn 5). She was therefore ready to go beyond the standard practices of cosmetic surgery. This seventh performance, with Dr. Cramer, was the most ambitious and radical in scope; it involved radical transformation of Orlan's face by inserting implants into the chin, upper cheeks and the sides of the forehead. Silicone implants similar to the ones that are usually inserted in cheek bones, were implanted into her forehead and positioned to give the impression of horn-like bumps just above the arch of the eyebrows. According to Jane Goodall, with this operation, Orlan "has made her departure decisively from conventional aesthetic principles for the composition of the face" (159). Also the documentary images and video footage of *Omnipresence* renders extreme close-ups and bizarre distortions of the interior of the face, muscles and bones covered with blood vessels, while the face is cut open with a series of incisions for insertions.

The eight surgery-performance was performed in New York a week later, accompanied by the reading of Sanskrit texts. This touch-up surgery lead to the production of Holy Shroud imprints; pieces of blood-soaked gauze on which portraits of Orlan were printed by photographic transfer. The ninth

operation, the last to date, also took place in New York in order to collect fat required to make some reliquaries and to do some touch ups. (O'Bryan 16)



Fig. 9. Official Portrait, Orlan, www.orlan.net, 2008.

Orlan frequently states that she is not against cosmetic surgery but opposed to the "standard criteria of beauty that cosmetic surgery imposes on female and male bodies" ("South Bank Show"). She has spoken at length about her intended rejection of the normative morphologies reproduced by conventional cosmetic surgery in her press interviews and in her statement defining her performance surgeries as Carnal Art. Hence, her performative Carnal Art project emerges as a critique of the western beauty standards and the way cosmetic surgery is practiced today to "help" women attain ideals of physical perfection. Through this consciously political endeavour, Orlan seeks to disturb the socially accepted practices of cosmetic surgery and presents a diversion from its usual goals, by using it for the first time against its intended purposes; as a means of transformation of oneself. Her intention is not directed toward enhancing or beautifying her visage, an ideal Orlan herself repeatedly insisted she is not in quest of. On the contrary, the artist reappropriates cosmetic surgery for her own ends to contradict the culturally accepted standards and expectations of beauty, by producing a result which is extremely at odds with them.

Furthermore, as Barbara Rose observes, "Orlan consciously chooses to undergo the necessary mutilation to reveal that the objective of ideal femininity is unattainable and the process horrifying" (123). Rose's argument is that what Orlan is trying to do is to expose and interrogate the unsettling, brutal process of cosmetic surgery by displaying the stages of her transformation and recovery, in order to bring it into the public discourse

and subvert the notion that an ideal beauty could actually exist. Other scholars who studied Orlan's oeuvre in detail such as Jill C. O'Bryan, Kate Ince and Michelle Hirschhorn explored *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* as seeking to disturb the hegemonic practices of mainstream cosmetic surgery by displaying the "ugly" side of the process and the dominant norms of beauty from male perspective.

Although the critique of the essentialized notions of beauty imposed onto the female body in contemporary Western society, through the practice of cosmetic surgery is one of the most obvious tasks of Orlan's project, her motivation for undertaking these surgeries runs much deeper than that. Orlan refuses to limit her investigation to purely these terms and considers the feminist aspect "just a fraction of her work" which explores more complex issues regarding human body and identity (qtd in Ayers 180). As a matter of fact, at the heart of Orlan's project is her investigation of conceptions of identity and the self, through her use of the object considered perhaps the most sacred—her own body.

If Orlan's work has any importance, it is, in fact, tied to her problematization of our ideas about the supposedly fixed, fleshy boundaries of the body and our definitions of the human as a unifed self. In that sense, *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, in which the artist brutally alters her face and her face in flux, probes at the deepest level on the very experience of human existence. In her study of the series, Jane Goodall defines Orlan's work as "exploring

embodiment through enactment in ways that evade the stock formulations of cultural anxiety and open up fundemantal questions about the nature and meaning of human body…" (150). Lying on the operating table, with a needle through her lip, Orlan makes her body entirely negotiable and significantly urges us to rethink our most basic assumptions about the stability of the bodily self. Orlan's intimate exploration of her own flesh demonstrates that the body is not a sealed entity with clear delineations between inside and outside, but converted into a malleable and transformable artwork that is ever changing. Due to the continuous operations she undergoes, her body is never inert or fixed, rather it appears as the actualization of transformation and change.

Orlan further aims at confronting the taboos connected to the violation of the bodily integrity and order in Western culture, by not feeling "threatened by this collective, ancestral fear of interfering with the integrity of the body,… that the body, formerly viewed as God's masterpiece, is sacred and untouchable, not to be transformed" (2008: 83). She also discusses the issue of biological predestination and freeing the body from any predetermined origin by claiming that she is struggling against "the innate, the programmed, nature, DNA" (1998: 325).

The term "re-incarnation" means "becoming flesh again" (Zimmerman 31), which foregrounds the transformative potential of the body, hence Orlan's performative surgeries that visualize her state undergoing the process of

change. In that sense, the artist's experimental attitude towards the body by treating it as a material that could be modelled and remodelled infinitely by cosmetic surgery, causes an unavoidable identity paradigm shift by breaking free from the fixed categories of logic that normatively promotes fixed subjectivity and essential self with any fixed nature. Goodall neatly expresses this motivation behind her surgical project: "Orlan's determination to interfere with her given identity provides the sustaining motivation for her whole oeuvre" (155). In addition to Goodall, O'Bryan analyzes Orlan's project as a primary critique of static identity by pointing out that the artist's constant refashioning of her body and face through the series of surgeries is "challenging the boundaries of identity itself" (77) and presents an artful circumvention of the fixity of identity that instead remains in a constant change. It appears logical to conclude from the reconciliation of these points that, Orlan subsequently posits an identity in flux, never fixed, but on the contrary, decidedly flexible, unstable and always in the process of transition.

Another crucial point that sets Orlan apart from the cosmetic surgery that is done to fix and standardize the looks of a person, is her decontextualization of the procedure in which she foregrounds the process, not the end results. Unlike these normative procedures whose focus is never the surgical process but rather the "closure of refiguration" (Adams 159) and the finalized subjectivity, the images of Orlan during and post operation highlight the process in which the body undergoes transformation and change. Orlan refuses the notion of a static result and instead suggests a definition that

foregrounds the fluidity of identity, adding what Michelle Hirschhorn calls "during" to the conventional rigid dualist structure of "before" and "after" of cosmetic surgery (117). In relation to this, as the author of the "Carnal Art Manifesto", Orlan writes that, in the foreground of her work is the processual nature of continually re-making herself, in which she displays the actual stages of transformation that contain contradictory bodily images; orifices, fluids, body tissue and the recovery period with photographs of her bruised and swollen post-operative face.

During the execution of nine surgery-performances, Orlan radically altered her own face and body by permanently adopting features from five of Western art history's most iconic representations of female beauty. Through surgical alterations, Orlan literally incorporated these icons of beauty into her own face by combining them with her own features. Using computer imaging and virtual photography, Orlan produced a series of composite images by using the photographs of her own face and the features of these five female figures. After computer morphing, Orlan supplied surgeons with these computer-generated images. Her selection of references is not coincidental as Orlan explains:

> Diana was chosen because she is insubordinate to gods and men; because she is active, even aggressive, because she leads a group. Mona Lisa, a beacon character in the history of art, was chosen as a reference point because she is not beautiful according to present standards of beauty, because there is some "man" under this woman. We now know it to be the self-portrait of Leonardo Da Vinci that hides under that of La Gioconda. Psyche because she is the antipode of Diana, invoking all that is fragile and vulnerable in us. Venus for embodying carnal beauty, just as Psyche embodies the beauty of the soul. Europa because she is

> swept away by adventure and permitting herself to be carried away into an unknown future. (qtd in O'Bryan)

The artist has repeatedly remarked that it was not her goal to resemble neither of these figures whose features she appropriated. (1996: 89) She claims to have chosen each model not for their ideal features, rather for their historical and mythological significance as well as for the personality traits or some quality each figure embodies. The link is a conceptual and symbolic one, as she explains:

> These representations of feminine personages have served as inspiration to me and are there deep beneath my work in a symbolic manner. In this way, their images can resurface in works that I produce, with regard to their histories. (1996: 89)

Seen in these terms, her appropriation of multiple art history referents to manipulate the form of her body and remake her face is not an attempt to become the ultimate ideal woman, but a strategy "to work against notions of aesthetic unity and identical resemblance" (Ince 46). Hence the goal of these surgeries was not to produce a unified, aesthetically pleasing, idealized whole by conforming to the standards of Western notions of beauty and identity, but rather to circumvent these standards by transforming the original significance of those art history referents.

It is in fact important to realize that, Orlan uses her body to acknowledge that the recombination of the ideal features on one face does not necessarily result in a unified whole and beauty. Rather she acquires a type of fragmented and ambiguous appearance that resists definition and closure, as a result of the discordant new features. Kathy Davis describes Orlan's

appearance as "slightly extraterrestrial" (29). Davis is not alone in her opinion of Orlan's image. Arguing that Orlan looks "distinctly unnatural in appearance", performance studies scholar Philip Auslander further states: "…the work's critical edge derives from the failure of the subject to become the desired image" (130). With her facial disfigurement and "failure… to become the desired image," particularly with the forehead implants she had on her temples to create two bumps, Orlan deviates from the human body's standard morphology and the contemporary cultural norms of ideal self, by moving closer to the "monstrous". The artist continues to emphasize her non-normative bodily irregularities with dramatic makeup, even applying glitter to the horn-like bumps on her temples. It is in these respects that, one might conclude *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* signals a departure from the confines of restrictive ideals of the human body and steers the subject closer to bodily disintegration, monstrosity and general uncertainty.

During the transformative surgeries, Orlan combines both roles into herself, by embracing a body that "becomes both the subject and object of endless combinations" (Viola 41). Since she chooses only local, rather than general anesthesia, Orlan maintains the contradiction of being both the passive patient/object under the surgeon's scalpel and the active participant/subject as she is actively involved in the process by remaining fully concious, choreographing and performing during the operation. Moreover, Orlan is at once her art object and the artist in her operating-theatre. Her own

processual self-creation through the surgical series has turned her flesh into the work of art itself.

Within the space of the operating-theatre, the cosmetic surgeons are as much performers, helping Orlan execute the surgery-performances. Auslander points out that "just as Orlan, as patient, is inscribed within the medical discourse of cosmetic surgery, so the surgeons are inscribed within the artistic discourse of Orlan's performance" (133). Their role as medical-performers as well as Orlan's being both the passive patient/the director in the operating room, visualizes the intertwinement between art and medicine.

As a visual artist, Orlan's work also crosses over from the art world to the world of fashion and style. In Orlan's operating-theatre, surgeons and nurses wear haute couture costumes designed by famous fashion designers specifically for the event, such as the leading French couturiers Jean Paul Gaultier, Franck Sorbier, Paco Rabanne and Japanese Issey Miyake. (Ince 21-2) During the performance, Orlan wears extreme hair and makeup, and another flashy designer outfit. The artist's involvement with these major figures from fashion and design can be seen as a significant example of dialogue between the fashion industry and the art world, thus an interpenetration of these two universes.

Orlan insists upon the revolutionary power of her art and defines her objective as to discuss the questions her art raises with the widest possible

public, by claiming that her work is socially oriented: "This is a performance inscribed within the social fabric...I say: art can, art must, change the world" ("Carnal Art Manifesto"). She further remarks that she focuses on the body as an alterable site that can be shared via communications technology to provoke public debate. Indeed, a crucial component of Orlan's project is the very public nature of the operations. While cosmetic surgeries are normally executed in absolute privacy, Orlan makes her surgery-performances public by telecasting them live, so that the procedures become "a political performance that interrupts the subversive strategy of secrecy" (O'Bryan 22). It is in this regard that, the public is compelled to confront with the actual procedure which is conventionally kept hidden. For example, Orlan shows extreme close-ups of injecting, cutting, suturing or liposuction during which the fat sucking tubes pull and distort her skin's surface. The way Orlan reveals and brings to the forefront the ugly and brutish realities of cosmetic surgery in the pursuit of idealized self both during operation and recovery period, incites public response and generates discussion. The artist explains that initially surgeons had refused to work with her "because they believe that plastic surgery should be kept in mystery—all that should be revealed is the perfect result" (qtd in Greenberg 117).

What is more intriguing is the extent to which Orlan transforms the normally sterile medical milieu. In the bizarre environment of the operating-theatre, Orlan rebels against the surgical protocol by directing the operation-performances and dressing up her medical staff with designer costumes.

Orlan herself comments on the reconciliation of these points as follows: "It was about among other things, desacrilizing the surgical act and making a private act transparent, public" (1996: 90).

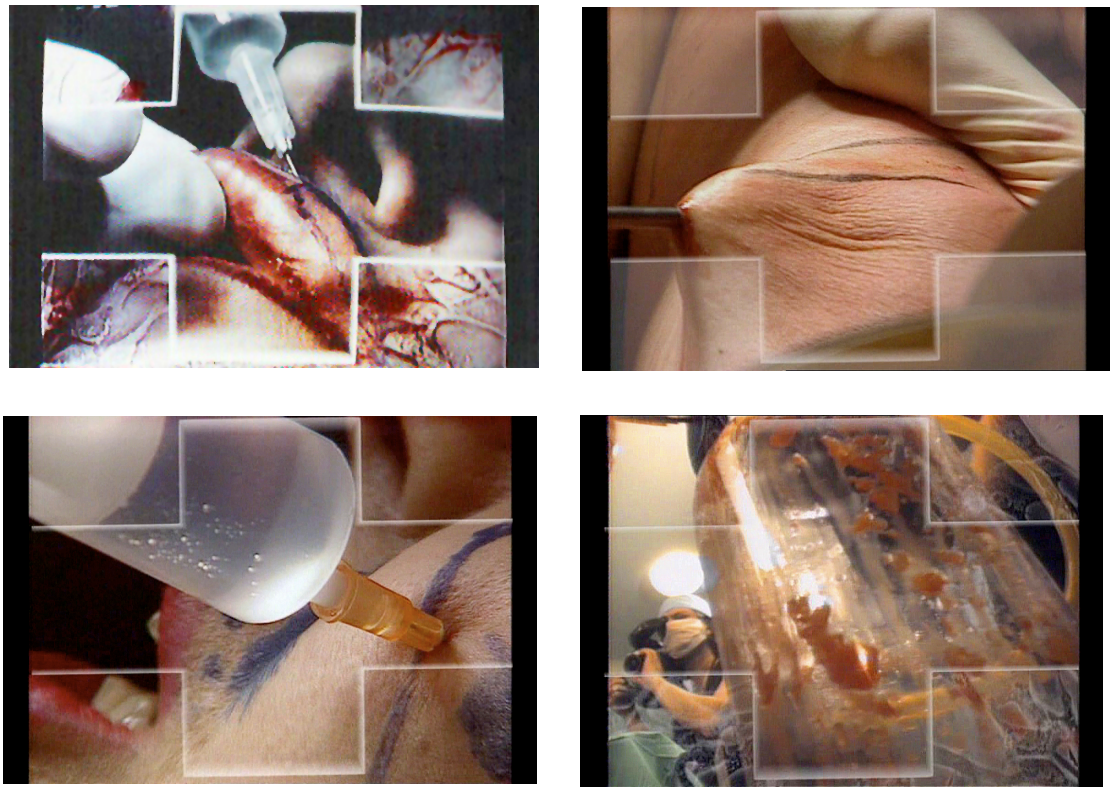


Fig. 10. Close-ups from documentary images and video footage of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan.*

Certainly it is the case that, the possibilities of Orlan's body transformation are explored through the advances in biomedical sciences, biotechnologies, computer morphing programs and medical interventions. According to Orlan's own account, her "work and its ideas incarnated in flesh pose questions about the status of the body in our society and its evolution in future generations via new technologies and upcoming genetic manipulations" (1998: 319). As can be derived from this, one of the most

important aims of her Carnal Art is to problematize the status of the body by exploring its relationships to new technologies, medicine and science.

Orlan also uses an array of interactive communication technologies to disclose her transformation and to disseminate her work, which is herself, globally. By means of digital networks of satellite, real time transmission and internet-facilitated communication technologies, her organic flesh is converted into transmittable digital representations, into virtual flesh, enabling her with the possibilities of dispersal, dissemination and scattering across the universal communications network. This way, her body becomes omnipresent, not only because its images circulate across the electronic space, but because people around the globe can interact with it. In relation to this, Amelia Jones observes that Orlan is "enacting herself (and literally *rearranging* her body/self) through technologies of representation as well as medical technology, her body/self is experienced (both by herself and by her audience) in and through technology" (227). Ultimately, the diversity of technology and science Orlan employs to realize her Carnal Art makes it all possible to eradicate constraints on the body and opens up novel ways of interaction between humans and other technologies.

In each procedure, Orlan insists on being conscious under local anesthesia in order to speak, orchestrate and narrate the highly choreographed performance. The type of anesthesia she is given is a spinal epidural injection. Orlan demonstrates a striking capacity for remaining calm and

rational, even as her body is cut open. She has stated that the disavowal of pain is central to her Carnal Art. Even as the scalpel cuts way at her face, she continues to read aloud her selected texts, laugh, smile with apparent pleasure and respond to audience members. Many of the images from *Omnipresence* reveal the great pleasure she takes in being operated on. Although Orlan assures us that she is not in pain, as Michelle Hirschhorn expresses, there is "something profoundly destabilizing about watching a woman's face being sliced open, seeing her bleed, seeing medical instruments moving indiscriminately under her skin, that words alone would simply not convey" (112).

Accordingly, I shall proceed with my discussion on how Orlan uses her own body to create unconventional viewing experiences and to integrate the audience as part of her performances. Looking at her performance and witnessing the tranformation of her body material have crucial significance in the experience of her art. In the surgical performances, Orlan's skin is literally peeled away from her body and, in viewing it, we "find ourselves unhinged in a space that refuses to organize an inside and outside" (Adams 156). Indeed, Orlan's project which fundamentally reverses the relationship of the interior to the exterior and turns the body inside out, shatters spectators' understandings of the bodily boundaries. The audiences watching the event in the galleries witness the bloody dissembly and carnal materiality of one's flesh, by looking into the "fragmented body composed of mass of internal organs, fluids, tissue and muscle" through the incisions and open

wounds on Orlan's body (Ince 52). O'Bryan also delves into Orlan's "extraordinary presentation of the unpresentable interior" with her open, bleeding, flayed epidermis (54), and her deliberate act to "draw the gaze of the spectators into her opened body" (39). The reconciliation of these positions points toward a performance that is designed by Orlan to invite, or rather oblige the viewers to confront the internal body viscera, in order to force them to react to her provocative and profoundly disturbing work, and ultimately to encourage their active participation into the dynamics of the work.

Watching Orlan's surgery-performances is not meant to be comforting, whose disruptive controversial imagery addresses the bodies of the spectators directly. While Orlan ensures that she personally experiences no pain during the surgery, we as spectators certainly do, as we watch her face being dismantled. The suffering is experienced on the part of the audience, while her body is numbed by local anesthetic injections. O'Bryan has an important analysis of how Orlan displaces her pain onto the suffering of her audience: "The pain of opening her body is projected onto the viewer, so that their physical response and involvement completes the performance" (xv-xvi). Orlan, being aware of this, ironically apologizes for causing pain to the viewers by saying "Sorry, for having to make you suffer" (qtd in O'Bryan 94) In fact, Orlan's performances, with her punctured, lacerated, interior body images, are intentionally painful to watch; they are meant to affect the spectator by inflicting pain on them, and provoke direct visceral responses

by initiating their own fleshly feelings. The artist herself describes this process as: "These images plunge in and strike directly where it hurts, without passing through the habitual filters, as if the eyes no longer had any connection with the brain" (1996: 84). Because the medium of the surgical process is the human body, common to each audience member viewing it, the opening of her body induces reactions on an eminently visceral and empathic level.

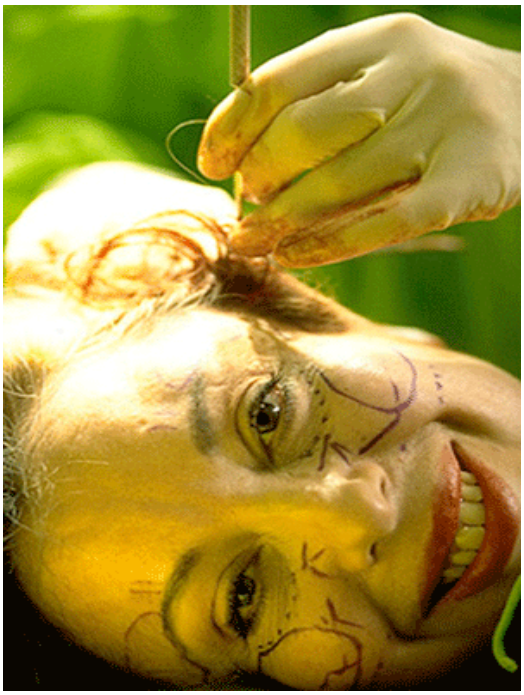


Fig. 11. Close-up of Laughter During the Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

Witnessing Orlan speak, laugh, and read aloud in calm rationality while surgeons operate on her face, magnifies the shock value of her actions by provoking awe and suspense in spectators. The physical reactions and chaotic feelings of the viewers range from stunned silence to anxiety, to seeming revolt and revulsion. While some well-wishers send their

encouragement, a woman among the audience in the viewing gallery asks in emotional outpourings: "Are you in pain?" (O'Bryan 18). In *Omnipresence*, she responded to this question as: "the initial injection hurts… After that the painful part is lying on an operating table for six hours" (18). In another source she acknowledges:

> A few words about pain. I try to make this work as unmasochistic as possible, but there is a price to pay: the anesthetic shots are not pleasant. It's like at the dentist… As my friend French artist, Ben Vautier, would say, "Art is a dirty job but somebody's got to do it. In fact, it is really my audience that hurts when they watch me and these images on video. (1996: 92)

Due to the sheer visceral impact of witnessing her mutant flesh and extreme excesses of blood, it is with their emotions and bodily senses that audiences become part of Orlan's surgery-performances. In this fashion, Orlan disarranges the neat and distinct positions that artist and viewers occupy, she threatens the solidity of the boundary between them and shock the viewers out of their discontinuous states, leading to the destabilizing feeling Hirschhorn describes. Hirschhorn further sees this unique involvement with the audience, the way Orlan incorporates their reactions into the performance as "one of the most interesting achievements of Orlan, as well as a point of primary importance within her project" (131). Indeed, the spectatorship in Orlan's work reminds the viewers that they are no longer passive observers, rather are involved in the actualization of the artwork, which encompasses them as active participants in the process of her transformation. By demanding the viewers to see themselves implicated in the processes of performance, Orlan not only collectivizes artistic creativity,

but it is also a straightforward strategy to arouse reaction and make the work a site of public debate.

Orlan begins each operation-performance by reading text from Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni's *La Robe*, implying that the self no longer occupies a realm of stability, and that her body's boundaries are no longer defined by her skin:

> The skin is deceptive ...in life one only has one's skin ...there is an error in human relations because one never is what one has...I have an angel's skin but I am a jackal...a crocodile's skin but I am a puppy, a black skin but I am white; a woman's skin but I am a man; I never have the skin of what I am. There is no exception to the rule because I am never what I have. (Orlan qtd in Clarke 193)

Reading this text is a ritualistic action that signals the breakdown of the skin as a border between the interior and exterior of the body with the opening of Orlan's own skin. The deceptiveness of the skin points toward Orlan's emphasis on the instability of the skin as a barrier. In addition to *La Robe*, she reads other philosophical, literary texts and extracts by Michel Serres, Julia Kristeva, Antonin Artaud and others during her surgery-performances. Orlan is an artist fully conscious of her acts, who has always recognized the relationship between the artistic, theoretical and intellectual scenes. The texts she reads aloud are important to her performances as they provide theoretical and philosophical support, and explain her motivations and intentions on what is taking place in the operating room. An additional function of speaking and reading during the performances is to remind the viewers that everything taking place in the operating room is a deliberate act designed by the artist, who maintains full conciousness and communication with others, even when the skin of her body or her face is being removed

from her flesh. (Schultz-Touge 122) During her seventh surgery *Omnipresence*, for instance, the video footage shows the surgeons literally peal away her face even as she continues to read.

Central to the project *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan,* are the video and photographic imagery of operations and the images she produces during her stages of recovery, along with the art pieces out of the performance's material by-products. Explaining that her body is a factory for a limited creative medium, and "the operating-theatre is above all a place for the production of artworks" (qtd in Viola 89), Orlan mounts post-operative exhibitions and installations during the period between the operations, and displays the art objects derived from surgery-performances. These include costumes, blood-soaked gauze and vials of flesh collected during the surgeries.



Fig. 12. Petit Reliquarie; "This is My Body, This is My Software", soldered metal, burglar-proof glass, 10 grams of Orlan's flesh encased in resin, 30 x 30 x 5 cm, 2001.



Fig. 13. Holy Shroud No. 9, 30 x 40 cm, photographic transfer onto blood-soaked gauze, plexiglas box, 1993.



Fig. 14. Holy Shroud No. 21, 30 x 40 cm, photographic transfer onto blood-soaked gauze, plexiglas box, 1993.



Fig. 15. Blood Drawing 1 , 50 x 60 cm, 1993



Fig. 16. Blood Drawing 2 , 70 x 100 cm, 1993.

The vials contain liquefied flesh, body tissue and fat removed by liposuction during the operations. Orlan calls these pieces "Reliquaries". These extracted flesh from her body, which she both exhibits and sells as artworks, are encased in resin and then mounted on panels inscribed with well-known statements by Orlan; "this is my body, this is my software", "the body is but a costume" (Schultz-Touge 148). In addition to reliquaries, using a photographic transfer process Orlan imprinted her face on scraps of gauze that were soaked in her blood and body fluids during her operations. These art pieces, entitled "Holy Shrouds", are the manifestations of "the oscillation between figuration and disfiguration" in her Carnal Art, in its most literal sense. ("Carnal Art Manifesto"). Finally, the finger-paint series of self-portraits, "The Blood Drawings" (1990-1993), were executed by the artist herself in the operating-theatre, during her surgery-performances in New York City. In these pieces, Orlan used her own blood residue to paint her own faces. Altogether, Reliquaries, Blood Drawings and Holy Shrouds are material manifestations of the ideas behind the performance that created them, and clear evidence that her flesh is a site for art making.

As a part of the gallery installations subsequent to her seventh operation, *Omnipresence* (1993), Orlan documented and exhibited her healing process by producing a major photographic exhibition entitled "Between Two". This series of forty-one post-operative self-portraits display her heavily bruised eyes, swollen cheeks and scars, the aspects of cosmetic surgery that are conventionally hidden from public view, so that her audience can also

witness her recovery stage which is not separated from its surgical context. With this exhibition, Orlan emphasizes the grotesque reality that the cosmetic operations inflict upon her flesh. As Ince points out, these stages of recovery in between surgeries, "or the notion of the interval, has been fundamental to the project…" (107). O'Bryan further argues, "Between Two" presents "the conceptual backdrop" for the series of surgical performances (124).



Fig. 17. 'Between Two': Omnipresence Installation at the Centre Georges Pompidou, forty-one metal diptyches and eighty-two color photos, November – December, 1994.

The sixteen meters long post-operative gallery installation of *Omnipresence* was made out of two horizontal rows of images that ran across a long wall. On the bottom row, Orlan presented forty-one self-portraits in which her face was digitally morphed with the images of female beauty from Western

painting. Running above these images were a row of photographs of her face that documented the daily change in her appearance from before her surgery to healing. These top images expose the normally hidden side of cosmetic surgery, the disturbingly grotesque stage of the forty-one day healing process with all her bruised, discolored, and swollen visage. When viewed in juxtaposition with the computer-generated images on the bottom row, they take on a new level of meaning. The entire photographic installation was based on the idea "to show that which is usually kept secret and to establish a comparison between the self-portrait done by the computer-machine and the self-portrait done by the body-machine" (Orlan 1998: 322). The 41st photograph which depicts Orlan's fully healed face, fails to match the presumed after-images delineated in the computer composites. Seen in these terms, the way Orlan contrasts the imaginary computer composites with those real images created by her own "body-machine", demonstrates the impossibility of entirely controlling and predicting how the body heals in response to surgery. Hence it is crucial in fact to see that, Orlan's patient documentation of her post-operative healing process exposes cosmetic surgery "as a lengthy, laborious, imprecise, and imperfect material process rather than a quick and easy result" (Augsburg 291).

Initially, the *Reincarnation* project was planned as a series of ten, and the tenth operation was intended to be about the nose. Orlan had plans to have a radical augmentation of the nose; to create "a gigantic elongated nose" that would start at the centre of her forehead, but some issues have prevented the

performance (Ince 110). This particular surgery which would dramatically alter the cast of her face was no longer a cosmetic procedure; rather it was a radical and more intrusive plastic surgery that would require a long period of preparation in skin stretching, grafts of bone and tissue. According to Ince, the aim of this unaccomplished surgery "appeared to be exaggerated monstrosity, an instantly perceivable deviance from any norms of feminine beauty" (77). The reason this operation did not take place, Orlan explains, is because she was unable to find a surgeon willing to make the nose that she envisioned, due to the restrictions on the amount of transformation, reduction and enlargement that a plastic surgeon can make without losing his/her medical license. She further states that she had trouble in securing the medical and financial guarantees required for the safe execution of the surgery.

Due to the absence of a certain closure in Orlan's project, she has never reached her final operation, her final self. *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* is an open-ended project, one whose end-point is deferred infinitely, hence remains uncertain. Ince suggests "this open-endedness and uncertainty are necessary, not contingent features of the project" (111). She goes on to say that as an end-point to *Reincarnation*, the construction of such a nose would have been a disavowal to the open-ended, experimental nature of Orlan's work from its outset. (77) In addition to Ince, O'Bryan describes Orlan's work as a "performance of incompletion" (xvii). She observes that Orlan's body is "as resistant to completion as it is to creating one identity" (xvii). In relation

to this, it can be deduced that Orlan never looks for achieving completeness. She does not offer a finishing point in time and fulfill the expectation of coming to an end. As a matter of fact, the whole point of her reincarnative process is to avoid any definitive appearance, fixity and closure, so that both the project and her identity would always be in-process.

Orlan subsequently discussed the possibility to continue with her operations if certain medical, artistic and financial conditions are provided, which will enable her to work in ideal conditions. (in Ayers 84) She mentioned two further operations she may undergo. Although these are not a part of the series of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and are not yet unscheduled, Orlan speaks of these surgical events as a perfect illustration of her manifesto of Carnal Art which denounces pain:

> I've thought about purely poetic operations, the goal of which would be to show that it's possible to open the body absolutely painlessly. There would be photographs and videotapes, just like all the other operations, and they'd show me laughing, smiling, reading, and talking to people. In short, people would see me living my life with my body cut open- and then they'd close me up again. (qtd in Obrist 195)

Finally, taking her investigation to its natural conclusion, Orlan acknowledges that she has plans, after her death, to turn her body into the center piece of a video-interactive installation in a museum, as she declares: "I have given my body to Art" (1998: 326).

2.3 Self-Hybridizations and Harlequin's Coat:

In her subsequent series, entitled *Self-Hybridizations* (1998-2007) Orlan continues her pursuit to remake herself, this time using computer morphing technology instead of the scalpel to transform the body. Orlan views this series of computer-generated self-portraits as a continuation of her surgical work, which again deal with the body and its modification. (O'Bryan 134) Hence, in this section, I will further my discussion on *Self-Hybridizations* series, which is a complementary body of work to *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and explore similar themes such as beauty and identity.

With *Self-Hybridizations*, Orlan enters a new phase in her art by blending her very own image with other cultures. In the series of works which followed the surgeries, Orlan created photographic pieces by digitally combining the images of her surgically altered face with different standards of beauty she collected from the images of pre-Columbian, American-Indian, and African sculptures and masks. For *Self-Hybridizations*, the artist worked with a digital imaging specialist and utilized 3-D modeling techniques to produce digital photographic portraits in which her reworked features are morphed with the stylizations, deformations and scarifications of these civilizations. (Schultz-Touge 166)

In order to better understand various facets of the artist's work, it is necessary to realize that Orlan has travelled throughout Mexico and Africa, and studied the histories of pre-Columbian and African civilizations, their notions of

beauty as well as their rituals and rites, specifically related to the experience and use of the body. Orlan comments on her analysis as follows:

> Metamorphosis is an old myth. One has always tried to transform the body. In certain civilizations, those of the Egyptians, or the Merovingians, one elongated the skulls of babies. The pre-Columbian placed a ball of earth between the eyes of the newborn so it would learn to squint. It was considered to be an attribute of beauty. (qtd in O'Bryan 135-136)

In that sense, the artist's newer work explores the digital possibilities for self-transformation based on the aesthetic values of diverse cultures and time periods she had studied, whose beauty ideals differ vastly from Western societies. Orlan's digital intervention even brings back some dead civilizations to life. So far three series have been realized, as Eugenio Viola discusses in detail:

> In Self-hybridations *précolombiennes* (1998-2000), the artist used morphing software to hybridize her new face with masks and votive statuettes of the Olmecs, Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs. The Self-hybridations *africaines* (2000-2003) were obtained by mixing a portrait of the artist with ethnographic photographs of African tribes…In the Self-hybridations *amérindiennes* (2005-2007), Orlan hybridized her own image with portraits belonging to various American tribes. (45-7)

The resulting images reveal the infinite potential of transformation, mixing and recombination made possible by new technologies in the digital realm. They offer many variations; Orlan is digitally disfigured into what appears to be women with protruding and sunken eyes, enlarged noses, or deformed skulls. In ever-changing juxtapositions of *Self-Hybridizations*, the artist further experiments with primitive disfigurements associated with beautification, past tribal and ritual deformations such as bulbous foreheads, inscribed skin, strange protuberances, tattoos or scarification. Orlan asserts that what she produces are "images of mutant beings whose presence is thinkable in a

future civilization that would not put the same pressures on bodies as we do today" (qtd in O'Bryan 134). Indeed, most of the images in the series disrupt the human form with their obscured forms; they are seductive but monstrous in appearance. With elongated necks, grossly distorted noses and skin lesions, in conjunction with Orlan's own modification; the bumps on her forehead, their type is difficult to distinguish. Seen in these terms, one might add that *Self-Hybridizations* contributes to the bodily ambiguity and produces an unpredictable, transitory state that may also be characterized as monstrosity.

Mapping *Self-Hybridizations,* which deepens Orlan's body-oriented project, demonstrates the artist's aim to contest the understanding that imposes a single standard of beauty on everyone. This series of digitally altered self-portraits explicitly address the relativity of ideals of beauty. In relation to this, Orlan states that; "it's simply the idea of saying that beauty can take on an appearance that is not usually thought of as beautiful" (qtd in Ayers 180). In depth, however, Orlan's move from operating on her own flesh to operating on the digital images, is again fully committed to identity interrogation, therefore continues to encourage us to reevaluate the way in which we comprehend subjectivity itself.

Self-Hybridizations series, along with *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, which involves the actual transformation of the artist's own body tissue, most clearly embody a theme present throughout her oeuvre: a critique of Western culture's vision of the body, as well as a consistent challenge to the

understanding that assigns and fixes identity. According to Orlan's own account, these computer-generated images which highlight the malleability of the body, demonstrate the "multiple, evolving, mutating identities" that result (qtd in Brand 305). Hence, her Carnal Art projects, whether digital or material, undo the fixed and static codes that structure the body in conventional configurations, and present an open, imprecise and endlessly mutable identity that exists free of confinement.

Another significant aspect that makes up this series is Orlan's persistent interest in creating an oscillation between figuration and disfiguration, and the mingling of real and virtual, as the artist herself explains:

> Contrary to what I did with surgical operations, the self-hybridization series do not inscribe the transformations in my body (my phenomenical body) but in the pixels of my virtual body, mixed with non-organical matter and my own representation, itself reworked by surgery. It would therefore be false to distinguish my operations-performances from my self-hybridizations, because the former do not belong only to reality and the latter do not purely take place in virtuality. I always tried to mix the cards, to transform the real into the virtual, and vice versa. (qtd in O'Bryan 134)

These digital photographic pieces, therefore, create a complex narrative that confuses distinctions between real and digital, time and place. Hence, they are suggestive of a plural aesthetics due to the increasingly disparate and multiple renditions of the body, where the grotesque becomes inseparable from the beautiful, the ancient from the contemporary, photography from sculpture and masks. Furthermore, Peg Zeglin Brand mentions the "genderless norms of beauty in *Self-Hybridation*" (291), where the boundaries between the female and the male are also blurred.



Fig. 18. Self-Hybridations *Précolombiennes*, 1998-2000.



Fig. 19. Self-Hybridations *Africaines,* 2002-2003.



Fig. 20. Self-Hybridations *Amérindiennes*, 2005-2007.

Since the possibilities of body modification are explored through trauma-free manipulation through computer imaging, Orlan is able to eliminate all the risks and costs that come along with the transformation of real body tissue in this newer work. However, it might also be argued that, her newer work lacks the depth of her surgical alterations in her *Reincarnation* project, as it does not involve any actual transformation of her material body. Even though most of the images are quite horrific and monstrous in appearance, they cause less visual disturbance and incitement to emerge, compared to the documentary images and video footage of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan.*

The various combinations available through digital means, capture another key element of this work; as Orlan notes herself, the possibilities are "not definitive" but rather endless; "It's possible here to do many things" (qtd in Brand 308). The artist encourages the viewers in the galleries or museums to further experiment with her images by means of computer terminals. Once again, the viewers find themselves actively participating in the development of the artwork, by rearranging and reconfiguring their own digital hybridizations. This ultimately proves that, like *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, emphasis is placed on the process of experimenting, on ceaselessly morphing into other forms and fluidity, not on finality.

Never satisfied with any of her artistic selves, Orlan's restlessness sends her to the next adventure. Her art constantly mutates and the digital hybridizations prefigure the biogenetic composites that she is currently

working on. Accordingly, I shall conclude this chapter by outlining the general contours of Orlan's most recent project, *Harlequin's Coat*, which is staged as a large-scale multi-media installation. As a continuation of her Carnal Art, in *Harlequin's Coat*, Orlan finds renewed forms of experimentation carried out on her body to transform it into a forum of public debate. The project is being carried out in collaboration with SymbioticA, the Australian art and science collective, which has a laboratory that specializes in culturing skin and cell tissues. Using the most advanced features of biogenetics and biotechnology, cultures of cells obtained by further surgeries from the artist's skin are currently being mixed with people of various ethnicities and animals of diverse origins. (Orlan 2008: 87)



Fig. 21. SymbioticA Laboratory, Australia 2008.



Fig. 22. *In-Vitro* Cultured Cells, 2008.

Concerning this genetic project, the long-term aim is to obtain scraps of skin of assorted appearances to create a composite coat, as of Harlequin's, whose multi-colored, patchwork-like costume is composed of different fabrics of different origins, as described in 'Laicité', the preface to *Le tiers-instruit*, a philosophical work by Michel Serres. In this text, Harlequin figure with his composite costume and multi-colored vision is posited to highlight the themes of multiculturalism and interdisciplinarity. In Serres' text, Harlequin is a figure whose being "conjures the possibility of infinite identities coexisting" and "radical otherness" (Garelick 76). With the context of this installation, Orlan uses Harlequin motif as a metaphor that conveys the idea of contemporary crossbreeding and the acceptance of other within oneself. (Orlan 2008: 87)

This is not the first time that Orlan was inspired by Harlequin's character. In *The Cloak of Harlequin* of 1991, the fifth of her surgery-performances, the artist wore a harlequin hat throughout the procedure, while the surgical staff was dressed with matching costumes of the same multi-colored pattern, designed by Issey Miyake. Orlan also read from the fantastic philosophical tale, 'Laicité', by Michel Serres during the operation.



Fig. 23. Biopsy, *Harlequin's Coat,* Perth University, Australia, 2007.



Fig. 24. *Harlequin's Coat*, Bioreactor, Videoprojection, Luxembourg, 2009.

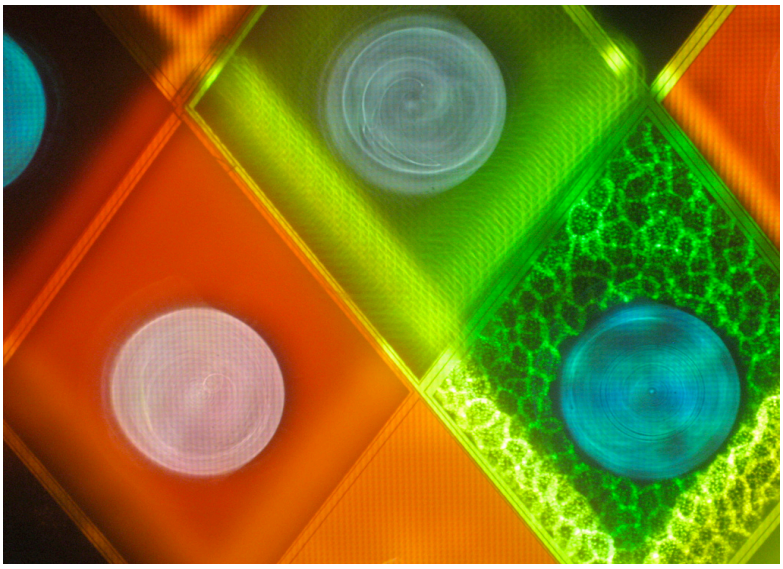


Fig. 25. Petri Dishes, *Harlequin's Coat*, 2008.

Partially born in a laboratory, *Harlequin's Coat* is a bio-art installation whose central part is the composite biotechnological coat which consists of a tissue culture bio-reactor designed and built for the gallery environment. Within this bio-reactor, environmental conditions necessary for cell growth are created, and co-cultured skin cells are embedded. This colored life-size garment has diamond-shaped patterns, in which Petri dishes containing the cultivated cells are embedded. (Orlan 2008: 84) Besides the skin cells extracted from Orlan's groin area during a videotaped procedure, the co-cultured cells in the bio-reactor, Orlan explains, include:

> human blood cells, mouse connective tissue and muscle cells, goldfish neurons, cells from an aborted fetus of African origin, the human brain (cerebral cortex), lactating human breast, cervix, menstrual endometrium, lip, skin (thin, thick scalp), umbilical cord and vagina, as well as monkey eye (retina), primate ovary, rabbit tongue (fungiform and filiform) and sheep tongue (vallate). (2008: 87)

The coat, in turn, could be construed as being composed partly of real tissue of diverse origins. However, since the tiny cells are invisible to our eyes, it is "extremely limited in terms of visual perception" and there is "nothing to see without a microscope" (Orlan 2008: 87).

In her creation of *Harlequin's Coat*, the artist drew inspiration from other fields such as design, style and fashion besides biologyand science. Textiles, decoration and style have always been important elements to Orlan since her earlier works. For this project, Orlan made her personal wardrobe public and transformed it into an artwork by integrating it into the installation. She and Spanish couturier Davidelfin recycled the pieces of Orlan's wardrobe into new garments which were then sewn as upholstery

coverings to transparent Ghost chairs designed by Philippe Starck. The patchwork motifs of the recycled garments are also used to decorate the gallery floor and walls. With their human-shaped garment cushions, Ghost chairs are placed around the biotechnological coat. The powerful motif of Harlequin prevails the whole setting of the insallation, in Garelick's words, the entire exhibition is "harlequinized" (79).



Fig. 26. Recycled Garments as Upholstery Coverings on Ghost Chairs, 2008.

With all apparent diversity of media, Orlan pursues an experimental method in this present exhibition, by opening up her art to multiple genres and disciplines at the same time; biology, genetics, philosophy, design, style, fashion as well as different human races, cells of different origins and species. This co-existence of different entities and realities which are always

susceptible to mutations, is crucial in understanding the exact nature of *Harlequin's Coat*. While the biotechnology Orlan is using, is an obvious outcome of her works which were realized through surgery and medicine, this ongoing project continues her previous investigations of interfering with the integrity of the body, using carnal medium of skin cells. Understood from this perspective, *Harlequin's Coat*, as a composite patchwork, marks the transition beyond a fixed unity on which previous models of subjectivity have been founded, and makes us rethink many of the structural features of bodily organization that we frequently treat as reality. Like Harlequin, Orlan shifts the very ground of being by creating a series of multiple and mutating sources, which release us from the heaviness of settled and unitary identities/entities.



Fig. 27. *Harlequin's Coat*, Gallery Installation, 2008.

Finally, as in her previous works, Orlan uses her artistic prerogative to design the installation in a way to envelope the viewers as active participants. Spectators are requested to put on harlequin-patterned slippers in the entrance, which have the same design on the gallery floor. When they enter the setting and sit up on the chairs, they blend with their surroundings; harlequin slippers meld into the patterned floor. Their bodies merge with those human-shaped, harlequin-patterned cushions emerging from the chairs. (Garelick 84) In a sense, the audiences become part of the work through the spirit of Harlequin. Orlan always insists upon the communication and sociality opened by her work. Within the welcoming atmosphere of the exhibition, they are no longer complacent observers, but rather fully engaged participants who are invited to pull up a chair and sit down comfortably to "talk, communicate, exchange, and meet" (Orlan qtd in Garelick 84).



Fig. 28. *Harleuin's Coat*, Gallery Space with Audience, 2008



Fig. 29. Audience with Harlequin- Patterned Slippers, 2008.

Having put her ouevre's details, the forthcoming chapter pertains to a discussion of the possibility and the meaning of Orlan's art with respect to Deleuze's philosophy. It will take up a variety of theoretical tools provided by Deleuze and Guattari, in a manner that will allow them to be useful for critically analyzing the character of Orlan's art, and for detecting the relevant parallels and compatibilities with the body-identity formations of the artist. Throughout the discussion, I shall attempt to explore the relevance of Deleuze's transformative theories to Orlan's ouevre of artistic act, particularly in relation to the topic of body and identity.

CHAPTER 3. A DELEUZIAN DEBATE ON ORLAN

3.1 Debate on The Reincarnation of St. Orlan and Self-Hybridizations:

As can be derived from the discussion in chapter two, the performance work *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and the series of digital self-portraits *Self-Hybridizations* are unique works of metamorphosis, whose ultimate focus is identity. Orlan believes that her flesh is fully implicated in her sense of selfhood and experience of a body is fundamental to human existence. (Heartney 229) Since the body is so closely tied to identity, she is moved by the idea that by refashioning her actual physical being, the experience and understanding of subjectivity will also radically be altered. (Heartney 228) The artist's open-ended transformation of body tissue brought by cosmetic surgery and more recently by digital morphing technology, continuously performs the instability and fluidity of identity, by marking her transition from a static position of stable subjectivity to a self-generating and mutable one.

Further on, the aesthetics of the performance surgeries and digital self-portraits is a definitive detachment from the theme of the body in its traditional connotation; the idea that the body is self-contained, inert, fixed and bounded. Rather, this is a body of process and change that is made and remade, offering the potential of continuous transformation as a malleable

artwork in the public arena. It is in these respects that, Orlan's Carnal Art is a complex project of processual self-creation; it presents us with a self that is infinitely rearrangeable and mutable, revealing that there is no innate human essence. Such a position seriously disrupts the fixed categories of logic that normatively promotes the notion of an essential being with any fixed nature, it causes a disarticulation of the concept of coherent and unified subject with stable forms of organization, and subsequently opens up the possibility to create alternative and more flexible forms of existence. It does so "by reopening the body-boundary which must remain closed in order to guarantee the level of repression necessary for the maintenance of organized subjectivity" (O'Bryan 131). This shift in the parameters of self ultimately encourages thought that defies the dualistic logic of Western thought primarily focused on essences, rigidly demarcated categories and fixed identities.

As this discussion has indicated, Orlan's creative investigations into the dynamics of body and subjectivity requires a different formulation from the conventional conceptualization of selves as unified and fixed entities. One promising reconceptualization of the body and the subjectivity for this project is found in the work of Gilles Deleuze. It is my key assumption that Orlan's fluid states of being which shift from one configuration to the next and her body that is always in the process of transition propose a different idea of embodiment, one capable of Deleuzian logic of 'becoming'.

Hence, the aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the significance of Orlan's body and identity altering practices along the lines of the contemporary critic and philosopher Gilles Deleuze's thought. Becoming, around which much of Deleuze's philosophy revolves, points to a dynamic process of change, thus proves to be valuable as a critical framework for exploring the dynamics of Orlan's practice, by allowing us to consider it as a transformative experience and reconfigure the processual nature of her art, which is herself, defined in contradiction to a self-contained and fixed subject.

In terms of identity, Deleuze's philosophy can be seen as a critical attempt to leave behind the traditional notion of the subject with any fixed essentiality. His philosophy is grounded on a more fluid and processual ontology at the base of which are the dynamic processes of becoming, with his serious consideration of mapping a new kind of subjectivity; one that is more flexible and open-ended in general. This entails understanding subjectivity, in terms of "the verb in the infinitive as pure becoming" (Deleuze and Parnet ix). He, along with his collaborator Félix Guattari, contest the fixed conceptions of 'being' which is separate from the processes of becoming, therefore argue that existence is not static; but is in constant flux. According to Tamsin Lorraine, Deleuze affirms productive and creative processes of becoming to avoid the rigidification of human existence and to undermine the security of settled identities formulated to be confined in constricting and stable forms of organization that are reduced to a set of already determined options (228-231). Becomings, in this sense, are processes involving the transformation of

self -not transformation from one point or being to another- rather they imply constant processual metamorphoses and destabilization of the static, unified understandings of identity based on binary logics. Rosi Braidotti points out to this dimension of Deleuze's thought, that would "favour the destitution of the sovereign subject altogether and consequently the overcoming of the dualism Self/Other" by placing the self in a multiplicity of relations to other forces of life (2001: 188), thereby freeing it from the imposition of preconceived grids or coded fixations. Becoming then, "functions as a deterritorializing agency that dislodges the subject from his unified and centralized location" (Braidotti 2001: 187) and destabilizes the strictly polarized subject/object, self/other, human/non-human categorizations of Western thought, in which one opposition inevitably predominates over the other. This kind of vision ultimately allows for change, exploration and experimentation on multiple levels and opens up spaces where enlivening possibilities of life can be actualized. In their collaborative projects, as well as Deleuze's single authored works, change, transformation, experimentation and difference which occur in the dynamic interactions of life are always privileged over statis, fixity, sameness and hierarchical binary categorizations.

This insistence on theorizing the possibility for constant change and transformation, articulates some of the same kind of concerns of Orlan throughout her ouevre, therefore it is exactly through the concept of becoming that the philosophy of Deleuze may be said to converge most

strongly with her. His theorizations' central usefulness as an elucidatory strategy to Orlan's art comes from its ability to help us understand how subjectivities are continuously constructed in never-ending project of becoming. Becoming, for this reason, will be a base to determine the arguments of this chapter, in order to explore the ongoing construction process of Orlan and her body's constantly changing nature. Deleuze's formulations together with Guattari on the theory of 'rhizome' as a radical form of connectivity which destabilizes the binary structures, will provide further insights into her ouevre, to characterize it as a form of expanded art practice that enables proliferating connections and arrangements and as a non-dualistic process that is no longer contingent on binary divisions. It is in these respects that, I believe, Orlan's investigation of the instability of her own self-presence that disrupts the polarized oppositions of self/other, and her craving for a breakthrough from accepted norms and settled opinions in terms of body and identity requires a turning towards the conceptual resources Deleuze provides, whose writings can itself be positioned as an experiment in thinking differently and overcoming the dualistic framework pervasive in Western thought. With his unique focus on unfolding new possibilities in being and articulating new modes of subjectivity, Deleuze allows us more flexibility in transforming ourselves, in response to dynamic processes of becoming at work in our existence.

This chapter also employs a number of complimentary concepts from Deleuze and Guattari including 'machinic assemblages' and 'body without

organs' since these concepts relate to the primary notion of becoming and are necessary to make sense of the complexities of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic philosophy. In sum, they are intimately linked together in an attempt to reject prevailing hierarchies, unities and dominant strata, and to overcome the rigid boundaries between binary terms in order to render them more fluid.

When discussing Orlan's surgery-performances, scholars often acknowledge the transformative and processual nature of her work, and express their personal arguments in a way that echoes the 'constant becoming' Deleuze describes. Arguments resound with his focus on unstable and non-unitary subject permeate analysis of Orlan's body of work, yet few scholars give Deleuze more than passing mention. O'Bryan, for example, argues that Orlan's body "always appears to be in the process of forming" and her identity is "of one who has exacerbated a state of flux (with surgery) in a live (and therefore already continually changing) human body" (54). Auslander further states that, Orlan's work presents "a self for which identity is mutable, suspended, forever in process" (quoted in O'Bryan 31). Hence, it is my contention that, the constant disfigurings and re-figurings of her body through a series of nine extensive cosmetic surgeries to date, along with the post-operation *Self-Hybridizations* series that digitally transforms her skin facilitate the forever-becoming potentials of human subjectivity and posit her identity in unstableness and flux. As a matter of fact, the artwork taking place is the very making of Orlan, therefore she performs her own becoming

in both ontological and artistic sense. Being involved in an attempt to release from the stability and fixity of embodied subjectivity, she engenders new possibilities and forms of living that go beyond any existing determinate organization and a coherent sense of personal self. It is in these respects that, Orlan's incessant body modifications may be seen as an affirmation of Deleuze's theory of becoming.

Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that becoming is the very dynamic of change; it is in fact the process itself: "Becoming produces nothing other than itself" (1987: 238). As a thinking oriented towards continual movement and ongoing process, the logic of the becoming tends towards no particular completion or end-state. Or else, it precludes the idea of finally coming to a rest. Processual becoming, then, is always in motion, always on its way, "always goes beyond such assertions of rediscovered identity. For a becoming is never a 'history' with fixed starting and ending points" (Rajchman 90). Hence, the logic of becoming shifts and complicates the very terms of fixed, finalized identity. This crucial point about becoming has specific relevance to Orlan's series of surgery-performances that likewise value process over result. In her statement defining her performative surgeries as 'Carnal Art', Orlan emphasizes that:

> the plastic result was not the objective - any result would have served my purpose…What really matters is the process, what happens in the operating theatre, and the fact that my body has become an area for public debate. ("Carnal Art Manifesto")

This focus on process away from a finished product and a finite entity makes it clear that Orlan does not aim to fix or adhere to a form of finalized, settled

subjectivity or strive to give a coherent shape to herself: a characterization that would cling to a static definition and thwart such a creative project. Rather, she sees art as a "process" (Buci-Glucksmann and Blistene 239), and seems to be specifically interested in the transformative process of modification, and production of continual flow of changes and images as an exploration of constantly mutating, transitional identity. According to Orlan's own account, her surgical project and the digital self-portraits do not imply a reaffirmation of the subject; instead of representing a mere "constructed re-personalization", they dramatize "a destabilization of the subject" (qtd in de la Villa 32-5). Subsequently, her Carnal Art projects which refer to a body in process as opposed to a body as product, help to express and understand the change in itself. In her study of Orlan's performance-surgeries, Parveen Adams points out that "the power of her work is here, in the surgical manipulation of her face, rather than in the conscious programme of art historical references which really are no more than rationalizations" (153). Within Deleuzian context**,** this is to say that, Orlan's investigation into the dynamics of corporeality may be seen as a journey wherein "going" becomes far more important than "arriving" to a state of rest (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 380). Put another way, the meaning of her work lies in the flux of transformation and the self that is continually unfolding and perpetually in the state of Deleuzian becoming.

Orlan's *Reincarnation* project, as argued before, does not conform to closure and finalization, it rather remains open without a certain, knowable end. The

incompletion of her reincarnative process, according to O'Bryan "keeps possibilities open" and renders her image and identity "further undefinable" (55). In addition to this, Auslander points out the "open-endedness of her surgical program leaves her identity indeterminate" and the project "consists of an endless deferral of the moment at which that new identity will be fixed on her body" (1997: 136-9). It is in this regard that, whether through the alterations with a scalpel or virtually with a computer, what Orlan seems to emphasize is the unfinalizability of her re-making process, along with the refusal to produce an end-product, so that the subjectivity will always remain in an unfixed moment of becoming.

The fluctuating quality of her body and identity is further enhanced by the artist's adoption of the name Orlan. In relation to this, Linda S. Kauffman observes: "Orlan –a synthetic name to match a synthetic identity-in-process" (1996: 42). The name change at the age of 15, coupled with the continual alteration of her actual physical being reveals Orlan's intended rejection of remaining constrained in given attributes and in an assigned identity.

Related to this denial of statis is Orlan's use of the photographs to document her recovery period from her seventh operation, in 'Between Two'. According to Ince, even these images which were taken each day for 40 days following the surgery, "drew attention not to the fixity of identity but to what is between the shifting visual identities assumed by Orlan in 'Reincarnation'" (107). Indeed, by making her post-operative body an integral part of the

surgery-performances and defiantly displaying the dramatic metamorphosis of her grotesquely bruised and swollen face, Orlan refuses to erase the materiality of the process of her surgeries and enacts an ambiguous, in-between and radically indeterminate identity. Like Orlan, these images flow and mutate, with her face going from black and dark red, to blue, to brown and yellow and swellings continue to change shape and size throughout healing. Hence, all of the images in 'Between Two' foreground process and change. They are suggestive of the fluid nature of becoming: transitory, unpredictably moving and unceaselessly morphing into other forms. For O'Bryan, the entire *Reincarnation* performs a metamorphosis, and this process of recovery which reinforces the physical instability is a critical part of Orlan's art. Subsequently, these forty photographs of the artist's recovery lead us to another correspondence between Deleuze's thought and Orlan's art, by demonstrating that her body seems to be always in the process of becoming.



Fig. 30. Portrait Produced by the Body-Machine four days after the Surgery-Performance, November 25, 1993.

A further aspect of Deleuze's conception of becoming has even more resonances with Orlan's surgical series. Becoming, for Deleuze, is an unceasing process where directions and outcomes cannot be easily anticipated or predicted. It cannot be known in advance how the bodies will become affected in the processes of becoming and what types of conjunctions will take place. All becomings are unpredictable in that sense, they allow for the emergence of new, unexpected formations. Therefore, to think in terms of Deleuzian sense of becoming entails thinking outside any predetermined structure. To put this in terms of Orlan; the juxtaposition of pictures of her swollen, bruised healing images against pictures of the computer generated anticipated face in 'Between Two', reveals the striking contrast between the real and the imaginary ideal, hence, offers a powerful instance of the inherent unpredictability of becoming. 'Between Two', which discloses the constant metamorphoses and becomings the human body undergoes on a daily basis, draws attention to our bodies' independent and unpredictable nature, and reveals how it is impossible to entirely control and predict the way in which body's tissue will heal after the surgery. As Orlan remarks herself, through these images the enormous gap between the plan; "self-portrait done by the computer-machine" and the result; "the self-portrait done by the body-machine" is revealed (Orlan 1998: 322). Despite the careful, meticulously planned bodily intervention, with this exhibition Orlan demonstrates that, she is in fact never entirely in control of her body and her skin always surprises her by undergoing becomings of various shapes and of unpredictable forms. As a matter of fact, what Orlan remains interested in

are the unexpected destinations of her bodily experimentations. In relation to this, Augsburg reminds that "Orlan is just as curious as we are concerning how her physical change will affect her- not only on the surface of her body but in terms of her sense of self-identity" (308). One could infer from this that the artist embraces the possibility of unforeseen metamorphoses.

Deleuze in his single authored works as well as his collaborations with Guattari in their two central texts, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, is rigorously critical of all self-bounded forms with internal, autonomous structures that have no connections to the outside. For him, explaining things in reference to their essence, interiority and pre-established boundaries would stall the dynamic processes of life, hence novelty and creativity. Therefore, it is fair to say that a significant aim of Deleuze and Guattari's work is to pulverize the typical articulations of the subject as unitary, self-sustaining and above all completely separate with neat divisions from the world. In order to overcome the limitations of self-involved and enclosed life forms, Deleuze and Guattari develop a radical reconfiguring of subjectivity. As Grosz argues, when speaking of their work, this alternative account foregrounds the subject as a "series of flows, energies, movements, and capacities, a series of fragments or segments capable of being linked together in ways other than those that congeal into an identity" (1994: 18). This view then, excludes identity that is derived from an inner core, rather it rests on the idea of an active and transformative subject who participates in its own processual self-creation through an open-

ended involvement with the external environment, and infinite connections, flows and exchanges in conjunction with other bodies. In *Foucault,* Deleuze writes that "the struggle for [modern] subjectivity presents itself, therefore, as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis" (1988: 106). He insists that self and the subjectivity ceaselessly take on new dimensions through a multiplicity of connections and interrelations with other bodies, entities and forces, hence are formulated on difference and not sameness. This is to say that subjectivity "necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 8). From this perspective, selves are not confined to individuated entities, rather they are transitory and connected, mingling with the bodies of others and external milieus. If subjects can flow into each other, interpenetrate with other bodies, then the strictly polarized, autonomous and self-sustaining subject collapses. This kind of connected and interdependent understanding of existence proves to be central to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and is constitutive of their subject:

> There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together… the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever. (1983: 2)

Hence, self and subjectivity are always implicated in their exteriority; through flowing connections and linkages they ceaselessly form with their surrounding terrains. Producing multiple encounters with others increase our capacity to act in the world and opens up new and challenging ways of inhabiting the world. In relation to how Deleuze and Guattari postulate the importance of encounters, Lorraine says, they "provoke vital living and

thinking" and this model suggests "living is a collaborative encounter" (133-5). Because such an understanding emphasizes the interaction between bodies, it decentres the traditional subject; subjectivity becomes peripheral inextricably dependent on others. What Deleuze proposes then, in his collaborations with Guattari, is a radically unstable, contingent and open-ended subject in-process that is "on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes" (1983: 20).

In complete concordance with their conception of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari's body is a fluid formation that creatively and dynamically produces itself. Considering this continual involvement with the outside in a dynamic mobility, Deleuze and Guattari develop a provocative and unconventional reformulation of the body as 'assemblage'. According to this reformulation, the body as an organically determined, static unity or an ordered, integrated whole with an inner core is contested. This vision, rather, considers the body as a dynamic realm which extends beyond its boundaries to form convergences and alliances with other bodies and external influences, in processes of becoming. In highlighting how a body is actualized in its linkages with multiple and divergent things, Deleuze argues that a body is "never separable from its relations with the world" (1988: 125). In her discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of body as assemblage, philosopher and gender theorist Elizabeth Grosz notes that this account presents;

> an altogether different way of understanding the body in its connections with other bodies, both human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate, while refusing to subordinate the body to a unity, biological organization or a homogeneity of any kind. (1994: 165)

She further remarks that the body is radically reconfigured;

> in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages it establishes, the transformations and becomings it undergoes, and the machinic connections it forms with other bodies, what it can link with, how it can proliferate its capacities. (1994: 165)

Here Grosz clarifies a number of key points the concept of body as assemblage brings about: a refusal of a unifying, homogenous ground and a focus on the capacity for forging connections and linkages. The human body/subject, then, is always delineated in terms of mobile assemblages, which are the collections of such connections, flows, exchanges, disparate matters and practices without yielding to an overarching homogenous unity. In relation to this, in *Dialogues*, Deleuze explains that there are "no more subjects, but dynamic individuations without subjects, which constitute collective assemblages" (2002: 93). A body in this schema can be anything, there is no hierarchy of being between ideas, things, human/non-human, animate/ inanimate, social, natural as well technological bodies; all have the same ontological status: "A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity" (Deleuze 1988: 127). For Deleuze, then, the idea of the body as an individuated, separate existence is replaced by a focus on connections and linkages with other bodies. This is to say that, bodies are open-ended compositions which are implicated in the larger flows of life; assemblages.

Further on, they are always in the midst of their becomings, infinitely made and unmade, instead of being fixed in stable and coherent propositions.

This kind of theorization of bodies has an affirmative effect that gives space for complexity and multiplicity, since the body is always defined in its mutual contact with other forces and its milieu. As a model whose vitality emerges from encounters, it also entails a certain overcoming of self/other binary that locks bodies into narrowly defined territories, into sameness and constancy. As Deleuze and Guattari neatly express, connection to other forces of life and becoming "is less a destruction than an exchange and circulation" (1987: 155). What emerge then, are dynamic and open-ended forms of existence that refuse such restrictive predefined categories and rigid dualisms; a fusion of multiple forms in a logic of multiplicities. Opposed to the category of subject as stable, unified and essential through the self/other binary, Deleuze and Guattari further characterize the self as "only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities" (1987: 249). Such a model ultimately opens up the possibility to create liberating forms and configurations, as well as novel and more intense ways of being in the world beyond ordinary experience and self-involved life-forms. Deleuze, therefore, challenges totalizing and hierarchical structures of any kind such as the concept of autonomous, unitary entities and suggests an aesthetic in which the binary polarizations and preconceived classifications (e.g external/internal, self/other, subject/object, human/non-human) are revised and instead linked together, for they delimit vital possibilities that

can be actualized with respect to other bodies through becomings, hence the very power of life for change and creation.

Deleuze and Guattari's project of fostering alternative forms of subjectivity in terms of becomings and open-ended approach to the outside, their radical reconfiguration of the body as assemblage which is no longer contingent on binary divisions, along with their emphasis on decentered forms, prove inspirational for this inquiry since Orlan's body is highly attuned to Deleuzian approach to the body in its declared purpose to exceed its static unity and become a collective site of ongoing interactions among all kinds of bodies, instead of being a sovereign, autonomous entity. The fact that Orlan does not consider the body as a bounded and stable centre for being in the world, but on the contrary tends to see it as a fluid, uncontained matter in a continuous process of construction, by regularly placing herself on the operating table, puts her in striking resonance with Deleuze's philosophy. The transformative theories Deleuze develops articulate some of the same kind of connections and interactions in which Orlan is interested: interactions that occur in terms of processes and transformation. While finding the conception of the self as fixed and immutable stifling, Orlan advocates a fleeting and unstable self that has to be transformed with every passing moment. The fact that she is interested in "mutant, changing, nomadic identities" aligns her closely with Deleuzian thought in terms of subjectivity (Orlan qtd in Viola 95).

Orlan's incessant body modifications through her digital self-portraits and most specifically, her surgical series create interesting possibilities for rethinking the way in which we interact with the world. The surgical opening of her body brings her into continuity with other bodies by becoming permeable to the outside, and in doing so, increases her bodily potentialities and capabilities to take on different forms, hence it makes her innovatively engage with a multiplicity of differences that do not solidify into an individualized and coherent identity. As the surgeon's scalpel cuts through the skin, her body is intensified, penetrated by other bodies, it incorporates them into its sense of self, and blends with external parts, disrupting the opposition between and destabilizing the borders of bodies. It overflows to its exteriority, intertwines with the world, spreading images of her dismembered/disfigured body. By regularly opening up the body, Orlan allows the very outside and life in, that makes her work possible. The surgical incisions and wounds on Orlan's face and body open a window into her private interiors; they invite the gaze of the viewers into the cavities of her body. Publicly flayed, it becomes continuous with the spectators' gaze who witness the production of an indeterminate, uncontained, exteriorized and fluid body. The surgical experiments of Orlan, then, dramatically perform a Deleuzian body, which undermines the stability of its fleshly territory from its fixed organization and extends over other selves, while also letting other bodies in. This "immediate relation with the outside, the exterior" that facilitates the processual self-creation of Orlan, captures a key element of her work (Deleuze 1985: 144).

When the artist mentions the deceptiveness and the instability of the skin as a border by reading Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni's text at the beginning of each surgery, in fact, she implies that the opening of her skin ruptures the body's enclosure. This is to say that, the skin no longer functions as a fixed barrier or border mechanism between what is of the self and what is not, by protecting the inner self from the external influences and the outer world. In her study of the series, Adams points out that, "the inside no longer lies patiently within the outside, contained and stable, and a guarantee that the world is just the world" (156-7). As a means for body's transformation, the skin no longer counterposes what is exterior to an interiority. Rather it serves as a medium through which encounters and reciprocal exchanges between the body, environment and technology are experienced. The quote from *La Robe* -"I am never what I have"- in fact, implicitly critiques the notion of a self with an internal, autonomous structure and indicates that subjectivity is always constituted in its exteriority and is not a self-contained state at all. Seeking an alternative to the view that envisages the body as sealed off, "singular, organised, self-contained, organic body" (Grosz 1994: 172) without points of linkage to the outside world, Orlan performs a body that is made and remade by always spreading, shifting, expanding and overstepping into other territories, linking to other bodies, ideas, technologies, spaces in a multiplicity of connections which are essentially in movement. As a body that can manage its own metamorphosis in the effects of the external influences it engages with, Orlan's body is contingent upon other forces of life and vitally linked to the world. The way she describes her Carnal Art, as

"a way of refiguring yourself, of vacillating between disfiguring and refiguring" and further as an attempt "to pry open the bars of the cage" is itself an implicit critic of the confines of a closed, static body corresponding to a discretely organized and individualized existence (qtd in Obrist 199). From this viewing point it would seem that, the notion of a body seperate from other bodies, the social field and technological invention is rendered impossible in her work. Orlan has once said, she "has never produced a work (drawing, photo, sculpture, video, performance) without conceiving of it as a body in search of other bodies to exist" (qtd in Schultz-Touge 25). This searching body of Orlan has a close affiliation with Deleuzian paradigm for the body, whose existence can only be enacted by means of all other bodies. Orlan's body, ultimately becomes the reflection of the open, fluid, multiply identified Deleuzian body that is immersed in the wider world, both in the realm of the real and on the net.

The omnipresence of the flesh in Orlan's work; the experience of being both present in the operating-theatre, also in the digital circuit via the networks of satellite and internet, further complicates the traditional conceptions of body and identity, and increases corporeal multiplicity, displacement and de-centralization. The digitalized transmission of the body replaces her 'real' flesh; her allegedly discrete, stable self, and is caught in the movement of electronic space. Orlan's body, then, is further exteriorized, dispersed to the outside and embraces the possibilities of global dissemination and scattering. Her deassembled and transmitted images proliferate in the visual circulation

of the online environment towards a worldwide audience. Being electronically connected to other bodies in other places, therefore, she implies a self that is multiple, fluid and de-centered, the qualities that typify the philosophical writings of Deleuze and Guattari. In addition to that, the processes of producing reliquaries further enhance the fragmentation and dispersion of the body. Dispersed, multiple subject becomes even more possible through these fragmented body in pieces, which serve as a material evidence that Orlan relinquishes her bodily integrity and unity.

This exploration of unfixed corporeal potentialities and proliferation of connections with other elements, which enable the formation of a non-standardized subjectivity, are of course facilitated by medical technologies that mould and refold her skin. Instead of simply containing her body as such, Orlan opens up a world of interaction and productive encounters between what was previously thought as opposite ends; biological body and technological apparatus, which puts her body in an incessant process of becoming. By subjecting her body to deconstructive and reconstructive technologies, Orlan is explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of the distinct barriers between organic body and mechanistic other. This translates into an overcoming of the conceptual barriers related to the rigid dualisms between natural (the biological, the organic) and artificial (the technological, inorganic). During the processes of cutting, opening, probing and suturing back together of her skin in the surgeries, sophisticated technological parts are inserted, implanted, installed into her flesh, into her

bones; the surfaces of self and non-self, biological and technological, visceral and synthetic fuse and fold into one another. The heterogeneous encounters between humanity and technological formations foreground a more fluid and flexible self whose corporeality enters a phase of multiplicity, as imagined by Deleuze. This radically interdependent and interconnected nature of existence subsequently blurs the distinction between where corporeal fleshy body ends and unnatural, synthetic realm begins, thus posits an ontological sameness between all things.

Within Deleuzian conceptualization, the body, then, becomes an assembled, multiple, shifting and fundamentally dynamic site of human-machinic interaction. These boundary-crossing couplings between synthetic and organic materials in continuous flux open her body out to new combinations, and the medical disassembly and reassembly by lasers, prostheses, silicone and sutures dramatize the processes of the body's technological becomings. The multiplicity of connections and the intertwining of body and technology in assemblages marks Orlan's transition beyond the original unity on which previous models of the subject have been grounded; they traverse her as a unified and self-contained subject and enact her corporeal subjectivity as exteriorized and open to the technologized-other. It appears logical to conclude from this that, by opening her body to the intrusion of differing range of inorganic implants and prostheses that mingle with her natural, corporeal properties, Orlan embraces a disintegration of self and demonstrates an openness to a radical otherness that allows for a less

bounded and more connected existence, which might suggest a Deleuzian understanding.

The Deleuzian becomings are complex processes of transformation and change that entail reciprocity. They occur when bodies collide, react, interact and make multiple linkages with other bodies. In their encounters, "Components remain distinct, but something passes from one to another, something that is undecidable between them. There is an area ab that belongs to both a and b, where a and b 'become' indiscernible" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 20). Becoming then, involves a process which serves as a passage between bodies, milieus and territories, affecting and creatively influencing one another simultaneously. Instead of uniting two distinct forms, it is the drawing into connection of both parties out of which a range of mutations, variations and new alliances come into being, such as the connection made between Deleuze and Guattari's prime example of the wasp and the orchid: "a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. The two becomings interlink" (1987: 10). Here the wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous species, each undergoes becoming where one does not become the other, rather both are transformed through mutual contact in a movement wherein surfaces meet and slide into each other, exchanging and capturing each other's codes. According to Lorraine, this model allows for "mutually constitutive effects in any interaction between two multiplicities" and "entails contaminating particles with another to produce multiple effects" on oneself (232). Rosi Braidotti further describes this

process as the "actualization of the immanent encounter between forces which are apt mutually to affect and exchange parts of each other in a creative and empathic manner," this way "new modes of affective interaction" occurs between the most disparate things, such as the one that occurs between the wasp and the orchid (in Parr 303-4). It is in these respects that, the notion of connection and contamination becomes crucial in comprehending identity as contingent upon the other and renders the hierarchical, oppositional ways in which we think about the relationship between self and other, obsolete.

To think of becoming in terms of interpenetrating multiplicities and inter-influence that alter both sides in creative ways, provides a helpful perspective to explore Orlan's technological metamorphoses whose mode of encounter is similarly linkage and exchange. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari's example of becoming that concerns the heterogeneous coupling between the wasp and the orchid can also be extended to the mutual contact between the biological body and technological formations, each having an effect upon the other. Put simply, they are mutually constitutive and contiguous with one another. Technologies as various inorganic implants and biomechanical prostheses are also transformed and reconfigured by their coupling with the body, as deeply as the body is contaminated and reconfigured by incorporating technological parts. The matters, forces and territorial codings of the technological formations link and connect with the matters, forces and territorial codings of the corporeal body, the two

intermingle in a process of an exchange, flow and transformation, creating the space of bodily difference and becoming. Subsequently, it becomes difficult to mark one as the reduction of the other, or as the favored and dominating term.

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is my contention that Orlan's perpetual transformations and self-creation in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* along with her more recent *Self-Hybridizations* series, with their consistent refusal of fixity of identity whose individuated existence is pre-given, can effectively be connected to Deleuze's conception of self whose vitality emerges from mobility, relationality, technological and environmental connectings. Furthermore, these body-oriented works which explore potentialities and connectivities with other bodies, forces and entities foreground an unstable, indeterminate, highly flexible and metamorphic self. Therefore, both series may be viewed as a contribution to Deleuze's theories of identity, as they involve a disintegration of the sovereign, autonomous, bounded self and propose an identity that is transitory, de-centered, multiple and fundamentally unfixable, the qualities that typify the writings of Deleuze. One might add that both projects open up possibilities between the self and the other by rendering their polarized oppositions obsolete. The fact that Orlan embraces her body as a site of a perpetual self-generating creativity, not only undermines these dualistic oppositions on which identity is based, but also the dualist ways of knowing that ground the Western thought. Seen in these terms, Orlan's complex body project is emphasizing

the enlivening potentialities available, both in artistic sense and ontologically, once the usual conceptual barriers associated with this logic of binary thinking is evaded. This is once again reminiscent of Deleuze, whose intent is to overcome the neat binary polarizations in Western thinking.

Underlying this unconventionally reconfigured ontology in terms of radical connectivity is Deleuze and Guattari's commitment to what refer to as 'rhizome'. It is through the rhizomatic connections between multiple and divergent bodies that the processes of becomings are generated. Hence, rhizome is key to the notion of becoming. Writing with Guattari, Deleuze puts forward the model of rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a connective and affirmative practice that provides a multitude of possibilities to link everything in a potentially infinite variety of non-linear paths, in an attempt to pluralize knowledge and to produce new ways for creative thinking against the traditional modes of classification and the binary logics that have dominated Western thought. (1987: 16) Deleuze and Guattari define this way of thinking as 'arborescent' model of thought and uses the image of a tree in describing its strictly hierarchical structures. The arborescent-tree model, then, is a metaphor of linear and ordered systems, and is grounded on a determining and dominating point of origin; the unifying deep root from which the tree trunk and then the dichotomous branching derive. For Deleuze and Guattari, this mode of thinking is ubiquitous within Western thought and culture, as well as in Western accounts of art and aesthetics and provides an understanding of the world built on a unifying logic that is

structured by binaries. Hence, it entraps us into centered and closed systems that perpetuate sameness and prevent dynamism. "We are tired of trees," Deleuze and Guattari say, "…all of arborescent culture is founded on them [trees, roots and radicles], from biology to linguistics" (1987: 15). This arborescent-tree model constrains creativity and precludes productive encounters and inter-connectivity among its elements, by positioning them into structural binaries, separate, distinct entities and hierarchical modes of classification.

Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome model which emerges as an attempt to disrupt the limits of arboreal modes of thought, derives from an acentered, horizontally growing root system in biology. Unlike the tree-like schema, the underground weed of the rhizome forms a "network of multiple branching roots and shoots, with no central axis, no unified point of origin, and no given direction of growth – a proliferating, somewhat chaotic, and diversified system of growths" (Grosz 1994: 199). Rhizomatic thought, then, can be mapped as an emphasis on a general interconnectedness and proximity, which is in sharp contrast to the dichotomized arboreal structures: "Unlike trees or roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 21). Within such a conceptualization, the rhizome allows for more fluid and multiple forms of existence by fostering complex encounters and connections often between the most disparate forms; milieus, ideas, people, practices that

are usually thought as distinct and discrete, producing novel synthesis and forming assemblages. As "a politics of creativity" Bogue remarks, this mobile concept of thought "is based neither on beginnings nor on ends but on middles – interregnums, intermezzos, the space in between, the unpredictable interstices of process, movement and invention" (1989: 105). The rhizome model, then, offers ways of being in-between, by positioning becoming, therefore existence in the middle. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, a becoming "is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between" (1987: 293). This mode of existence in the intermediary space allows a vision in which dualisms that would fix positions do not exist. This rhizomatic milieu of in-between in which "a dualism or dichotomy can never be assumed", (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 9) rather affirms binary terms without excluding the one from the other. It binds even the most formal dichotomized forms into dialogue with each other, hence enables the construction of assemblages that are the heterogeneous arrangements of seemingly divergent components, distinct spheres or different realms of life brought together: "…a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling, of bodies reacting to one another" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 88).

Machinic assemblages, as provisional and experimental linkages of elements, "unites heterogeneous orders, species and qualities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 330) that have an influence on, interact, mingle with each other. In relation to them, Deleuze and Guattari write:

> For the moment, we will note that assemblages have elements (or multiplicities) of several kinds: human, social, and technical machines... We can no longer even speak of distinct machines, only of types of interpenetrating multiplicities that at any given moment form a single machinic assemblage. (1987: 88)

Hence, as a composite concept, Deleuzian concept of assemblage offers a way to map creative intertwining of elements, forces and fragments of disparate status away from the determining logic of identity. Bogue gives a detailed explanation of the concept:

> …an amalgam of the physical and the mental, natural, and the artificial. The unformed matter of this plane of consistency contains equally and indifferently fluxes of words, plants, ideas, minerals, dreams, and animals, shifting configurations of particles and alignments of force; it is on this plane that a non-organic life emerges, the life of the abstract, immanent, virtual lines of variation of all experimentation, creation, and becoming. (1989: 149)

Such assemblages, as he further traces from Deleuze:

> penetrate all strata, and assemble men, women, animals, plants, and minerals in heterogeneous, functioning circuits that link man and nature, the organic and inorganic, the mechanical, and non-mechanical, in a single sphere of interaction. (1989: 129)

This extented realm, then, which is constructed by the connected points of the rhizome, opens the pathways for new forms of living and brings about unprecedented possibilities in self, that are impossible to sum up through homogeneous totalities with a single unifying principle. Indeed for Deleuze and Guattari, such a domain shifts the perspective from thinking in terms of identity and sameness, to think instead about encounters and differences. An assemblage, as conceptualized by Deleuze, is never a static ground, rather infused with motion and change without rigidifying into a unified or stable state. It does not form some moment of completion, hence, goes hand in hand with processes of becoming, transformation and dismantling of

existing static configurations. An assemblage is never a singular unit like a well-formed organism, it "follows no central or hierarchical order, organization, or distribution…" (Grosz 1994: 167). The concept of assemblage, then, as a non-totalizable collectivity permits all sorts of couplings, linkages and alliances but not according to an overarching structure. More precisely, its constituting elements become partial and decentered components inextricably dependent on each other.

Making connections and forging alliances between different fields of forces appear as the core element in Orlan's work, hence is crucial in understanding the exact nature of *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and *Self-Hybridizations*. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari's formulations of rhizome and assemblage in terms of open-ended, dynamic formations that ceaselessly connect elements in constant flux, provide powerful theorizations to articulate Orlan's body of work, capable of forming diversifying connections with larger milieus and collective arrangements in a continuous variation without yielding to a unified, stable centre. Orlan's multifaceted performance series, *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* involves art, aesthetics, medicine, philosophy and every aspect of the media and technology. It opens itself up to tactical alliances between different ideas, disciplines, domains, objects and people such as art history, science, medical practice, biotechnology, communications media, fashion, surgeons and spectators that rarely converse with each other in such an intense manner. Orlan speaks of her art with a similar emphasis; she is careful to acknowledge the collaborative nature of her

multidisciplinary performances, by downplaying its individual significance. The list of collaborators throughout the piece involves the media team composed of photographers, video and filmmakers, medical and caring professionals, fashion designers and of course spectators. (De la Villa 35)

While *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* is visualizing a radical approach of art and medicine intertwinement which collapses their disciplinary boundaries, it is a drastic alteration of the body that similarly explores the intertwinement of identities; artist/patient, doctor/performers relationships, as well as the artist/artwork connectivity. Orlan's work also productively engages with the world of fashion in such a way that "art and fashion appear to be most inextricably interfused" (Ince 23). This collective side of Orlan's artistic practice in the manner of its organization, is also recognized by Ince, according to whom, both *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and *Self-Hybridizations* involve constant communication and collaboration with computing specialists and graphic designers working with computing technology, agents, representatives of the media, as well as personnel of galleries, museums and other art world institutions, apart from the medical and media teams involved in the operations (26). In her *Reincarnation* surgical series, inviting her audience to participate and respond simultaneously through interactive media technologies, Orlan emphasizes that her open body is connected to the audience, thereby creates boundless interaction with her milieu: "I open the window so that all of the people in the world can share with me in my operation" (qtd in O'Bryan 95). Since the

performance is dependent upon the active participation of the viewers, they are no longer distanced observers, rather become her collaborators in the processes of her own becoming. In *Self-Hybridizations*, Orlan also encourages the viewers to digitally experiment with her face, hence is engaged in a continuous and dynamic interactive process with them. The multiplying connections between participants on a global scale, remotely via satellite or by means of computer terminals, mark the artwork as a site of interconnectivity that extends across the social field and restates the rhizomatic nature of her work. This turn away from a certain kind of autonomy to an open flow of interactions between the collaborators of the artwork, and the affirmation of a collective enunciation through a multidisciplinary approach produces new lines of variation and expansion, and aligns her artistic act closely with Deleuzian rhizomatic thought.

Orlan is, at the same time, a connection-making entity in herself; a figure of interrelationality in one embodiment. By making the categories separating the organic flesh from the technological apparatus, the organic from the inorganic, the human from the non-human dissolve into an extended space of linkages and alliances in one physical corpus, Orlan allows for a more flexible and fluid existence. Having abandoned her fixed identity and going beyond predetermined categorizations, she presents alternatives to hierarchical binary structures and fosters non-dualistic forms of subjectivity. Seen in these terms, her mutant flesh facilitates a multiplicity of perspectives

to humanity by enabling a proliferation of possible body and identity configurations uncontained by any fixed category.

In *Self-Hybridizations*, once again, using computerized transformation Orlan becomes the embodiment of multiple connections and a constant flow of linkages between the ancient and the contemporary, visceral and virtual, civilized and primitive, man and the beast, thus exposing the ways in which one term mingles with the other. The convergence and intersection of these different realms of experience create regenerative possibilities in this series and demonstrates a multiplicity of corporeal expressions, as the artist implicitly reveals herself: "I make myself into a new image in order to produce new images" (1998: 316). In that sense, possessing a non-hierarchical, open, decentered structure, Orlan's conceptualization of her art marks the rhizomatic interaction and connectivity Deleuze describes, between apparently distinct semantic and stylistic networks, with their folded arrangements and conjunctions in assemblages. Orlan's identity, like the rhizome, is never at rest, always relational, always to connect – "the rhizome is uniquely alliance... the rhizome is the conjunction" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 25). The overflowing complexities of multiple elements that overlap onto each other in her art, enable the construction of decentred rhizomatic networks in which everything has the potential to be rhizomatically connected to everything else within an unceasing flux, and a process through which a Deleuzian logic of multiplicity comes into existence. This logic of multiplicity, which forms the basis for the rhizome and

assemblage, is "irreducible to any sort of unity" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 42). Like Deleuze and Guattari, then, Orlan attempts to extract multiplicity from a prior unity, fluid becoming from settled identity. Her art practice creates an open, fluid system that recedes in every direction; always in contact with an outside, it crosses onto other milieus and complexifies, continually producing productive encounters that ultimately contribute to a dynamic multiplicity and creativity. Such an expanded art practice appears as a terrain which has the capacity to reveal itself in a constant transformation and an ever-changing flux, as a result of the interacting bodies that themselves evolve in creative mutations through these rhizomatic relations and complexities overlapping onto each other.

As a logical outcome of these connections, disrupting dualisms becomes a central aspect that makes up *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and *The Self-Hybridizations*. With the breakdown of these dualist premises, Orlan is overturning and exceeding the arborescent-tree model of Western thought. While several scholars have noted, before me, the binary crossing nature of Orlan's ouevre, I assert that Orlan's body of work, which always situates itself outside the binary structures surrounding art, technology, medicine and personal identity, in fact operates within the non-binary, intermediary space of Deleuzian rhizomes. O'Bryan, for example, notes Orlan's art commitment to obliterating binary oppositions:

> By making her personal body a public body, she performs a collapse of a binary structure that polarizes (and hierarchizes) relationships between male/female, self/other, natural/unnatural, interior/exterior, beauty/the monstrous, art/medicine and so on… (116)

Indeed, Orlan's entire work conveys an understanding that resists the dictates of social mechanisms and hierarchical structures that impose particular limitations and uniformity on the body in terms of dualities that divide man from woman, beautiful from grotesque, human from non-human, real from virtual, natural from artificial, instead it consists of exchanges, flows and linkages between apparently contradictory terms, concepts, perspectives in order to create a fluid existence that freely engages in the intermediary, non-binary space of the rhizome. Like a rhizome, Orlan's self "has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 21). In that sense, Orlan creatively weaves her own rhizomes by creating a sense of body knowledge that aims at mingling of dualities in a ceaseless flow. It is in these respects that, the framework of identity based on binary logics is no longer adequate as a means to articulate the status of Orlan's embodied subjectivity. By allowing disjointed terms and contrasting attitudes toward the body co-exist in concert with each other, she does not let her art become predetermined by exclusive alternative between binaries, instead creates a realm of events that affirms everything. As the artist continually points out, she rejects discourses around art that tends to be premised on dualisms and explains her artistic strategy as a refusal of any kind of "either/or" relationship: "Our whole culture is based on the 'or'- for example, good or bad, private or public, new technology or painting, etcetera, etcetera. This forces us to condemn one element and choose the other" (qtd in Ayers 184). Rather all her work is based on the notion of "and"

that conveys inseparability of opposites through an interweaving relationship:

> In my work 'And' is an organizing principle that always recurs: 'past and present' 'public and private', 'that which is considered beautiful and that which is considered ugly', 'the natural and the artificial', 'satellite transmissions and the drawings I did with my fingers and blood in the course of my surgical performances,' 'the relics sculpted with my body and the works done by computer drawing and morphing… (Orlan qtd in Heartney 229)

This principle of "AND", according to Deleuze, "is neither one thing nor the other, it is always between two things" (1995: 45), it opens the space for the conjunctions to proliferate and signifies "diversity, multiplicity, the destruction of identities" (1995: 44). This kind of strategy: "to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo" (1987: 277), Deleuze further suggests with Guattari, is the only way to sidestep the oppositional structures and get outside the binary logic.

The way Orlan makes creative use of all forms of technology to compose her art, signals boundary-breaking encounters between real and the synthetic, and profound connectivity with otherness, therefore turns her corporeal subjectivity into an unsealed entity constituted by complexifying encounters, diverse arrangements and all manners of becoming between organic, inorganic, technical, social, natural, artificial materials and/or bodies. This is a body that is always "incorporating and incorporated" (Ross qtd in Jones 229). This strategy of opening up her corporeality to exteriority, therefore to 'othernesses' taken from multiple bodies in a dynamic interaction posits Orlan's oeuvre of artistic act in-between milieu of diverse possibilities, in the

non-binary space when different realms of experience commingle, (human/ non-human/ animal-beast/ machinic/ organic/ inorganic/ real/ digital/ figuration/ disfiguration) which characterizes the intermediary space of rhizome. No longer containable within polarities, Orlan fosters an indeterminate flesh that posits itself in the middle space that is characterized by movement and change. The potential transformation of herself always occurs through the expansive capabilities of these ambiguous spaces of in-between that express an openness to other bodies, objects and spaces. Seen in these terms, always supposing a dynamic, unstable zone Orlan's Carnal Art practices, whether material or digital, clarify the body's interconnected and contingent nature, that is capable of engaging in and living through the "intermezzo" as put forward by Deleuze and Guattari. It appears that, both Deleuze and Orlan are interested in the rich potentialities these in-between milieus offer, for enacting fluidity and creativity both in ontological and artistic sense. As a matter of fact, Orlan's artistic act is always situated "in between"; in between processes of recovery, in between stages of surgeries, in between states of self and other. It appears as if what she aims for, is a transitional, imprecise, indeterminate identity that exists free of constraints within a non-binary space; a fluid, rhizomatic existence that recognizes the priority of in-betweenness.

With the rhizomatic linkages and exchanges that continuously rupture her personal homogeneity, Orlan's selfhood, then, is reconfigured as a heterogeneous and collective site of seemingly disparate terms that are made

to resonate with one another. Through multiple involvements and dynamic transitory interrelationships it establishes with a wide mix of heterogeneous multiplicities, Orlan's body has the potential to realize the dynamic field of Deleuzian assemblage as a collective arrangement of interpenetrating elements. Her body becomes an open and shifting space of non-hierarchical configuration of practices, domains, techniques, events and both human and nonhuman realms of life, as opposed to a closed, separate and static unity hiding an inner essence. This demonstrates how Orlan subjects her body to an effect of dispersion and envisages it in terms of networks, linkages, movements and flexible arrangements as an alternative to a discretely organized, hierarchically structured body. The opening of the body towards the surrounding terrain and its reassembly in dispersed rhizomatic networks disrupt the static formulations of subjectivity in terms of a self-contained, homogeneous unity and open the possibilities of transformation and becomings. It pushes the body into a collectivity and reconfigures it as a heterogeneous site of flesh that defies traditional boundaries of where human beings end and the world outside begins. Subsequently, within Deleuzian formulation, Orlan becomes "the product of an assemblage – which is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events" (Deleuze and Parnet 51).

When examining Orlan's surgical project in terms of its functioning, it is typically a Deleuze/Guattarian conjunction of the natural and the artificial,

whose parts come equally from former incommensurables; organic organs and non-organic parts in the form of silicone-based prosthetics, or purely plastic implants as a multiplicity of heterogeneous parts which are rhizomatically linked and function together. In these specific assemblages of human-fleshy-machinic interaction, technological formations and corporeal body are placed in proximity and mutually configured in the process of assembling. As they meet, overlap and coincide one another, they change, transform and undergo becomings. To reformulate, Orlan's project explicitly addresses the transformative potential of these bodily connections.

Since there is no passive appreciation of the performance by the audience, they are drawn directly into its dynamics, thereby adding another layer to the assemblage. This way, Orlan succeeds in producing new assemblages with the surrounding social field. She embraces Deleuzian logic of assemblage, which intricately connects her flesh, spectators, surgeons as performers, and dancers engaged together in the context of operating-theatre in a productive meeting of flows, as well as medical and communication technologies, public, fashion, science that react dynamically to each other in an active becoming. When we look closely at how bodies respond in the space of operating-theatre, the bodies' openness to each other and their surroundings is revealed: the event is made up of a plurality of experiences in which the flows, forces and energies of bodies link and connect to the flows, forces and energies of other elements, bodies and technologies. The interactions, exchanges and contact between these multiplicities

subsequently give rise to differing experiences and configuration of new bodies. Similarly, *Self-Hybridizations* series engenders a body composed of contingent connections and multiple arrangements between different civilizations and aesthetics of different space and time, contaminated with the othernesses of non-human. It ultimately engenders the body as a dynamically assembled field of physiological and sociological nature, and displays a multiplicity of bodily differences.

Since Orlan does not proceed by aiming to fix a definitive contentment of identity, instead dispersing and opening it to a multiplicity of forms and experiences that are irreducible to a single unity, her embodied subjectivity can be grasped by frameworks of Deleuzian assemblage, which cannot be unified under a single original entity. Delineating her subjectivity in terms of a dynamically assembled field enables a more nuanced and complex understanding that does not commit to a self-contained understanding of identity entrapped and grounded in a closed body. As an individual who is always implicated in assemblages with the larger flows of life, Orlan foregrounds the mutative relations and connections as the crucial mechanism of her oeuvre, not a settled, unified identity, in a move away from being to becoming.

Further on, the assemblages Orlan forms are based on a multiplicity of heterogeneous parts, none of which is preferred over the other. The technology and its integration into the organic body neither represent its

assimilation, nor the artificial invasion of the body. Or else, there is no total collapse of the organic flesh into the synthetic realm. Orlan never neglects the materiality of the body and lets her organic body superseded by the wonders of technology in an overarching structure. Her primary bodily experience never becomes largely artificial, surrendering fully to technology. As the artist frequently remarks, she never uses new technologies for their own sake and keeps her critical distance towards them (Orlan in Viola 127). Rather she remains interested in the connections and linkages between humans and technology by tightly interweaving the two, in order to produce a multiplicity of bodily expressions. Indeed, with each operation and digitally morphed image, her body becomes increasingly multiple and disparate in morphology, polymorphous with the unusual and ambiguous physionomy. It can be claimed that she manages this by proposing a dual emphasis and interdependence between the allegedly binary oppositions. Orlan always prefers to maintain both sides as such: "painting or new technologies" "drawing or video", "sculptures or internet", "reality or virtuality", "the natural and the artificial" and the like (Orlan in Ayers 184). This clearly demonstrates the coexistence of components within the assemblage in a multiplicity of non-hegemonic forms.

The conception of the body as assemblage, recalls immediately Deleuze and Guattari's 'body without organs', which appears to constitute a particularly illuminating framework for conceptualizing this kind of exteriorized body, that is placed in direct relations with the bodies of others and connected up

into assemblages, once its sovereign and static mode of organization is ruptured. Antonin Artaud's seminal manifesto *To Have Done With the Judgement of God* (1947) which was also the theme of Orlan's sixth operation-performance *Sacrifice*, provides Deleuze and Guattari with the source of body without organs. They develop Artaud's concept, signifying it with "BwO." The notion of the BwO along with the assemblage, are Deleuze and Guattari's attempts to map alternative ways of thinking about the body, and offers plentiful possibilities and alternative routes from conventional formations of unitary selfhood. For Deleuze, as well as for Guattari, the BwO signifies the full potentiality of the body in terms of its relations with the world**.** The organism, they claim, with its integrity and autonomy of its own, is an organized, rigidified and stratified life form. Unified within binary structures, it is a mode of normalization and hierarchization that is an oppressive structure of capture and a constraint imposed on the body, as they write: "The BwO howls: "They've made an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body!"" (1987: 159). Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari, as it is shown by their attack "on the organic organization of the organs" (1987: 158), move away from the organic unity of the body central to humanism and advocate instead bodily experimentation and the construction of BwO, a medium of becoming and transformation that resists the organized body whose meanings and functions are fixed. BwO entails the disruption of the processes that strive to organize life within formal organizations and rigidly demarcated categories, hence dismantling the organized body as a self-contained and integrated whole. It is only at this

point that a consideration of the body in its exteriority becomes possible, that is open to multiple linkages with other bodies – both human and non-human, animate and inanimate. BwO therefore entails; "opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage…" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 160). BwO then, can be understood as the body forming new configuration of assemblages, the body as exterior, open, multiple, experimental and interwoven with the bodies of others, the capabilities that are formerly unrealized by the unified organism with its hermetically sealed boundaries.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari identify three dominant strata which constitute us as human in a determinate configuration. These strata that bind and limit us most directly are defined as signification and subjectification along with the organism (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 134). While organism, as argued before, refers to the hierarchical stabilization of life into a formal unity, processes of signification and subjectification entail the articulation of meaning and formation of the clearly defined subject, by sorting people into binary categories that remain stable (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 134-5). According to the structure of strata, we are regulated by conventional norms of the social field and are coagulated into meaningful, hierarchically organized totalities that constitute us as unified, autonomous subjects.

Against the oppressive and authoritarian systems of strata, Deleuze and Guattari openly encourage the creation of BwO, which involves dismantling the self with its specific, fixed organization and determinate configuration. They define this process as a "destratification" and offer strategies for destratifying from these various strata of human existence, hence from the overly constrictive forms of subjectivity. BwO as "the non-formed, non-organized, non-stratified or destratified body" (1987: 49), opens the strata up to "disarticulation", "experimentation", "nomadism" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 159), by rupturing their dominant and oppressive coding mechanisms. BwO is what remains when the strata are dismantled; it is the pure, dynamic, living matter that allows transformations and becomings to happen: "The body without organs is not a dead body but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 30). Further on, in dismantling the self, the body is never alone, rather it fuses with the world:

> If the BwO is already a limit, what must we say of the totality of all BwO's? It is a problem not of the One and the Multiple but of a fusional multiplicity that effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple. (1987: 154)

This fusional multiplicity, Deleuze and Guattari stress, connects the BwO up to other bodies. Lorraine further describes the process of constructing a BwO as opening one out onto the world in a way that encourages producing connections with other bodies and surrounding territories, thus giving rise to new configurations; unprecedented assemblages, other than that imposed by the conventional norms and the habitual patterns of the social field. (170-2) Deleuze and Guattari's notion of BwO, then, as a site of pure movement and

transition that initiates the body's infinite fusions with the world, effectively suggests the possibility for the creation of new modes of existence. Whenever the body gets dismantled, becomings and transformations might also occur. The dismantled body becomes the becoming/transformed body. It becomes a BwO. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, there is an open call to become involved in the creation of BwO and the experimentation with the new bodily potentialities it offers. It is in this sense that, BwO can be conceptualized as a practice that enables a gradual transformation of the existing strata that bind us, in order to open up unprecedented ways in living, in understanding the world and ourselves. BwO, as a matter of fact, is not just a concept, but an experimental set of practices (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 149-150).

Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of BwO has extraordinary conceptual resonances with the body of Orlan, which resists any kind of predetermined structure and negotiates with its exterior milieu in constant flux. Not agreeing to the stable boundaries of her flesh, it can be argued that, in her bodily experimentations throughout *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and *Self-Hybridizations*, Orlan operates with the same revelatory intent to dismantle the presupposed, fixed organization of the self. She effects a metamorphic destratification of the human subject that Deleuze and Guattari call for, by a method of active dismantling of the strata that bind and constitute her as 'human': the homogeneous stasis of self-enclosed personal identity and the stratified organism. As a person who is no longer "organized, signified, subjected" by the rationality of the organism (Deleuze

and Guattari 1987: 161), Orlan constructs a BwO in the truest sense of the term, that is, pure matter undergoing constant transformations. Orlan's BwO rejects the body in autonomous, self-sustaining state and breaks away with its organic unity, its organized internal forms. Rather her BwO posits itself as radically open, extended, inherently interconnected and plunges the body into processes of becoming out of stratified systems. By pushing the body outward, to where the relation of self and the world are put into play, she forges linkages among heterogeneous matter and constructs collective arrangements between a diverse range of practices, activities and a wide array of organic and non-organic life, that branch out to form a "fusional multiplicity". Put simply, Orlan makes herself a BwO which is "a Collectivity (assembling elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people, and fragments of all these)" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 161). In a Deleuzian sense, Orlan's artistic act, most specifically her surgical experimentations in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* that alter her body until the point of disfiguration, entails a project of destratification of the most radical kind. It is in these respects that, I believe, the body of Orlan can effectively be read as an artistic expression of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of BwO which is imbued with enlivening potentialities, and her construction of BwO as an attempt to liberate from the confining organization of the self that allows novel configurations with larger flows of life –assemblages– to emerge.

Through their complex and elegant conceptual framework, Deleuze and Guattari offer specific directions for how to dismantle/destratify the body

and make oneself a BwO. Rather than obliterating subjectivity entirely, they map a new form of subjectivity that would continually incorporate fluidity, premised on the affirmation of becomings, as they remark; ”Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself” (1987: 161). Deleuze, along with Guattari, also warn against wild destratification: “…overdose is a danger. You don’t do it with a sledgehammer, you use a very fine file” (1987: 161). For that reason, they advise to handle this experimental process of constructing the BwO with ”great patience, great care” (1983: 318), as it is a risky process that can easily go wrong and end in destruction or self-annihilation. If you reach out for the BwO ”with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing a plane you will be plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 161). In relation to this set of practices, Braidotti further stresses that they;

> need to be dosed and timed carefully, according to one’s threshold of sustainability. This sense of limits is extremely important to prevent nihilistic self-destruction. The dosage of the threshold of intensity is both crucial and inherent to the process of becoming. Becoming aims at affirmation not at destruction. (2001: 179)

Consequently, one should proceed cautiously and gradually in the creation of BwO. This delicate process of destratification, then, entails dismantling ‘part’ of the strata. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari offer specific steps and instructions toward the creation of a BwO:

> You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. Mimic the strata. You don’t

> reach the BwO…by wildly destratifying...looking for the point at which they could patiently and momentarily dismantle the organisation of the organs we call the organism. (1987: 160-1)

One could derive from this that, constructing a BwO does not entail abandoning the structure or rejecting the organizing boundaries entirely, because doing so can lead to a complete breakdown of subjectivity. As the steps toward creating a BwO, Deleuze and Guattari suggest lodging oneself "on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous point on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization…" (1987: 161). It is only "through a meticulous relation with the strata", paying attention to the existing structures that one can succeed in this potentially liberating practice (1987: 161).

In complete concordance with Deleuze and Guattari's writings, Orlan is well aware of the risks of experimenting with the BwO each time she undergoes a surgery; the risk of having her living body turned into dead flesh. Exceeding the limits of the biologically determined organism and making herself a BwO does not, according to Orlan, involve self-destruction. Rather it is a matter of patient and gradual transformative experimentation that needs be handled with taking all the precautionary measures. Indeed, 'caution' seems to be the watchword for understanding Orlan's interest in destratification. The danger is a significant dimension in her surgical project which always involves the risk of an accident and failure. As Barbara Rose observes;

> each time she is operated on, there is an increased element of risk. She insists on being conscious to direct and choreograph the actions, so the operations take place under local rather than general anesthesia. The procedure, known as an epidural block, requires a spinal injection that

> risks paralyzing the patient if the needle does not hit its mark exactly. With each successive surgical intervention and injection, the danger is said to increase… To at least some degree she risks deformation, paralysis, even death. (82-7)

As well as the dangers associated with the surgeries, Orlan is fully aware of what she can expect of a surgeon and limitations of her body's organic system. Further on, it is clear from her body altering performances that, she takes each stage slowly and undergoes a constant yet non-destructive transformative process:

> At first finding a surgeon was a difficult thing. After many rejections, I found one, a cautious one who proceeded to go ahead a step at a time, which allowed me to understand where I was going and what it was possible to make happen in an operating room, what the limits were, what my limits were, how I would react, how my body would react; and thus to learn better how to orchestrate the entirety of these operations. (Orlan qtd in Augsburg 320)

From this viewing point one can derive that, Orlan is not ignorant of her life, her becoming neither aims at self-destruction, nor takes the organism for granted. In one of her operations:

> When she realized that continuing with the cheek implants, which were to be inserted through holes made inside her mouth, would mean enduring considerable pain, she did not risk having more anesthetics, she decided on the spot to postpone the rest of the procedure. (Schultz-Touge 133)

In addition to this, even though Orlan discussed the possibility of continuing with her surgeries, eventually she decided not to undergo them because she was unable to secure suitable medical expertise and any guarantees necessary for the safe execution of the surgery. (Ince 110) The reconciliation of these points proves that, in going beyond the fixed organization of the body and constructing a BwO, Orlan allows for a gradual transformation and proceeds through careful manoeuvres, by keeping enough of the signifying

organism and subjectivity in order to prevent their obliteration. In that sense, her art practice is not a wild destratification and never loses sight of the subjectivity by following an absolute destruction of the material body. Orlan's strategy rather involves a re-evaluation of already existing structures, "a meticulous relation with the strata", by looking patiently for the point at which she can dismantle "part" of it through a reconfiguration of her flesh, in a similar fashion to Deleuze and Guattari's suggestions. The body no longer has the same contours and the corporeal boundaries are challenged, but the artist maintains a close relation to the existing strata by retaining the essential features and components of her organism, to enable her to further use them as referential basis for refashioning the body and to avoid self-annihilation.

Deleuze and Guattari argue, wherever there is strata there are possibilities of destratification. The practice of cosmetic surgery, as a social formation with its normative function to reproduce conforming bodies, can be conceptualized as a milieu coded by the strata. In that sense, Orlan uses the cosmetic surgery as a Deleuze/Guattarian stratum from which she seeks out possible alternative routes. One might argue that she decontextualizes the normative usage of the practice, but the important point here is that she makes use of it as a kind of solid ground to create a zone of transformations within it and to experiment with the BwO. In other words, Orlan deliberately aims to "lodge herself on a stratum", on the existing, stratified milieu of cosmetic surgery that regulates and moulds bodies into idealized corporealities, in accordance with the dominant order. She, then, seeks to "experiment with the opportunities it offers" and embraces the possibilities

of bodies shifting and flowing in different directions, by unhinging the medical practice from the normalization of bodies and the construction of ideal selves.

The initiation of these connective practices and strategies renders Orlan's art, which is herself, unnatural, transitory, indeterminate but ultimately transformative. Art of this kind may be productively articulated by Deleuzian terms because of his proposal to expand the array of human interaction and resonance with the world through his theoretical formulation of "becoming-other". In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari assert that aesthetic becoming is "the act through which something or someone ceaselessly becomes-other" (1994: 177). All becomings, in that sense, are the ongoing processes of interaction with the world of the 'other', or as Braidotti explains, involve otherness; they "inevitably and necessarily move into the direction of the 'others' of classical dualism" (in Parr 303). It is the encounter with both human and non-human others that allows for the emergence of rejuvenating possibilities and creative growth against the fixity and stasis in life. In relation to this, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze writes, "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter" (1998: 139). In most of his writings, Deleuze recognizes the engendering and regenerative effect of others. For him, the other "encompasses the possible worlds" (1993: 63). Since otherness is the integral element of one's becomings, the subject who is contaminated with the others suggests a rich sense of connectedness. Deleuze and Guattari's

notion of becoming-other, in this sense, is the metamorphic movement through which the subject is open to the othernesses taken from multiple others.

Much of Orlan's philosophy revolves around the idea of creating new variations and possibilities in living that would expand the human experience, by composing a highly flexible embodied subjectivity in an interdependent activity of self-making. To reformulate, her project portrays a move away from predetermined and fixed parameters of existence towards a more fluid and intense form of living, in an ever ongoing dynamic process. All these becomings seem to be inspired by the idea of openness to the world, the desire to move and experience something beyond one's usual realm of experience and vision, by extending toward and mingling with the territory of the 'other'. Orlan expresses this attitude as: "by wanting to become another, I become myself" (qtd in Davis 29). This way, she destabilizes the coherent sense of personal self and individual, closed body that excludes the forces of connectivity, instead she gets into an intense communication with the territories around her. Hence, it is my contention that, Orlan's mode of engagement and interaction with the bodies of others can be productively conjoined with Deleuze's formulation of becoming-other. Orlan goes through the intense experience of becoming-other, through becoming-other than who she is, by acknowledging the constitutive effects of heterogeneous others. The alteration and reconfiguration of her flesh, whether through a scalpel or digitally with a computer, propels Orlan

forward in her own becomings; always decentered from the fixity of identity, she is at times "becoming-animal" or "becoming imperceptible" and at others she embraces monstrous or biotechnological becomings, as I shall reveal in detail in the forthcoming discussion.

Discussing Orlan's relationship to the same theoretical frame, it can be argued that, Orlan is becoming-other precisely because of the experimentation and investigation of the human form by a profound connectivity with other human and non-human life forces. Her flayed body during the surgical process of recreating itself is plugged into alterier realms, into the outside, into the world of others, hence signals the breakdown of the boundaries that delimit the 'human'. Her Carnal Art practices that oscillate between defiguration and refiguration, deliver us to a world in which the body ceases to be just human. This unhuman nature of her art, which is revealed through a liberating play with monstrosity is also acknowledged by the artist herself. (1996: 20) Orlan's surgical experiments, most specifically the seventh operation *Omnipresence* marked the process of metamorphosis of her morphology to the territory of what was radically 'other'. Her ambiguous, fragmented and slightly bizarre look resulting from the surgically discordant new features of her face deviates from the constructs of normalized anatomy and displays a radical bodily difference that resists categorical definitions. Ultimately, it effectively propels her embodied subjectivity from being mere human to something else. These bodily deviations and non-normative forms that arise from technological

extensions, implantations, displacement and the reassembly of unrelated parts are further enhanced by the artificial excess of her 'bumps', the implants Orlan had inserted into her temples during *Omnipresence.* Altogether, these deviant forms allude to the possibility of her transformation towards absolute alterity, into a monstrous 'other'. Orlan's "distorting reshaping of her facial features" is also recognized by Ince (22), who observes that the post-operative photographs of the bloated features created by cosmetic surgery further supports these distortions and a "facial monstrosity" (74). Subsequently, instead of embracing sameness and conformity, Orlan's body displays a corporeal ambiguity, diversity, uncertainty and indeterminacy that is disturbingly in-between and it radically dramatizes the intertwining of self and other; the rational, allegedly normative body, biomedical prosthecity and monstrosity.

As is evident from the interactions between wasp and orchid, becoming-other "concerns alliance" between heterogeneous bodies "to form a block that runs its own line 'between' the terms in play and beneath assignable relations" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 238-9). Deleuze and Guattari describe this process toward "contagion" and "unnatural participations" as a means of forming becomings between the most disparate things (1987: 240-1). Through these "unnatural participations", becoming-other can open up possibilities for these kinds of monstrous alliances. Indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari remark, every body is monstrous to some extent in terms of generating heterogeneous encounters between human and non-human

worlds which are involved in a form of affective capture, as they write: "Inevitably there will be monstrous cross-breeds" (1987: 157). In *A Thousand Plateaus,* we see manifest their keen interest in different modes of being beyond the category of mere human and in a world of imperceptible, generative forces of non-human life. With these boundary-breaking alliances and collisions between different fields of forces, such as the one between the wasp and the orchid, transitory, unnatural, but ultimately transformative couplings may arise and give way to unprecedented forms in living.

With her surgical and digital self-making/remaking that are understood as processes of transformation, Orlan undermines the contemporary cultural norms/forms of human physiologies, the order and rationality imposed on human bodies and signals a passage towards monstrosity, to becoming-monstrous. According to the artist's own account, she is retransforming her body "in a way that violated dominant aesthetic criteria", and the changes she makes to her face "is an attempt to sidestep the norms by which we –and I- are constrained" (qtd in Obrist 199). Through the mutative modification of her body both in surgical and digital terms, Orlan escapes out of the confines of restrictive ideals of human shape and exemplifies the anomalous figure of alliance in a similar fashion to the wasp/orchid coupling. In that respect, transitional nature of her work that dwells upon the realm of the monstrosity has a close affiliation with Deleuze's conception of non-human becomings and his speculation about the inseparability and connectedness of the self and the other, in processes of becoming-other. When speaking of the concept

of becoming-other, Bogue asserts that in its operations it "necessarily engages the underprivileged term of each of these binary oppositions" (2003: 35). Orlan, then, might be said to release the monster, the animal – the 'others' of classical dualism, from their underprivileged position and binary isolation with humanness; so that they are no longer split off from the self, rather their boundaries become shifting, permeable and unstable.

Within such a conceptualization, certainly, there is a polyvocal corporeality and multiplicity of bodily differences in the metamorphic modification of Orlan. Instead of remaining as an individual, closed body that privileges one dualistic, oppositional difference over the other, Orlan complicates the understanding that makes a selection of binary choices between human and its non-human others, to congeal into a unified and coherent subject. As previously explored, Deleuze and Guattari are against all kinds of dualisms through which female and male, self and other, human and non-human and so forth, are set against one another since they delimit, to a large extent, human experience, hence creative living. They call this process "biunivocalization", the "translatability of any kind requires a single substance of expression" (1987: 179) and they find it necessary "to produce successive types of deviance for everything that eludes biunivocal relationships" (1987: 177). From this perspective, Orlan resists a corporeal identity organized in a biunivocal mode and operates by binarization; privileging human over non-human, self over other and the like. Rather she mutates in a decentralized, polyvocal manner that results in new actualizations, new types of becoming. By disturbing the organized dimensionality of the

body, its dichotomies and binary oppositions with others, such as the self and the other are undone. In Deleuzian vocabulary, Orlan, by "forming strange new becomings, new polyvocalities" (1987: 191), breaks away from these binary processes and enters a realm beyond biunivocalization of human and non-human. According to Braidotti, this process in turn can be seen as;

> a positive appraisal of monstrous differences (deviances and anomalies) not as an end in themselves, but as steps in a process of recomposition of the co-ordinates of subjectivity…It is rather an attempt to disengage the process of becoming from the classical *topos* of the dichotomy self-other. (2001: 190)

It is in this regard that, Orlan might be said to defy the traditionally hierarchical and oppositional ways in which we think about ourselves and the world, and opens pathways for alternative forms of living that would be able to mingle with the forces of outside.



Fig. 31. *The Second Mouth*, Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

During Orlan's seventh surgery-performance, *Omnipresence*, a photograph was taken of a surgical cut made just below her chin. This photographic plate was later titled as *The Second Mouth* (Ince 60). The opening which emerged at the moment the skin under Orlan's jaw was peeled away from her face, suggests a radical bodily deviation and non-normative form. The image of *Second Mouth* is monstrous because it is an excessive opening under her chin that could easily be mistaken for a real mouth at a first glance. One might say with this atypical, excessive, deviant form, Orlan oversteps into the territory of otherness and "eludes biunivocal relationships" that Deleuze and Guattari describe. Put simply, her body is drawn into a monstrous becoming. *Second Mouth* signifies the interdependent nature of life; here as a form of human/non-human connectivity. It is at this point crucial to stress that, Orlan neither imitates monstrosity; nor turns into a monster, rather something passes between Orlan and monstrosity, which renders her body unnatural, other. She might be conceptualized as being contaminated with forces of monstrosity that make her remain a human becoming-monster. Or Deleuze might say, she is engaged in "an absolute deterritorialization of the human" (qtd in Bogue 1989: 111). Through opening up her body to monstrous amalgamations within the processes of becoming, Orlan opens pathways "to pry open the bars of the cage" that she describes (qtd in Obrist 199), and displays a multiplicity of bodily difference. What emerges then, is a more connected model of human which collides the self/other binary. The series of transformations and the radical disfigurings and refigurings of her face and body in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan,* then, re-delineate her with

uncertainty, corporeal polyvocality and transitory monstrosity that correspond to the unfixed and de-centered attributes characterizing Deleuze's thought.

In addition to the surgery-performances, in *Self-Hybridizations* Orlan explores similar kinds of transformation and metamorphoses through encounters with extreme possible otherness. The aesthetics of *Self-Hybridizations* is again a crossover from the idea that the body is enclosed, discrete and bounded, instead it proposes a fully contingent and impure corporeal subjectivity which can only take place via others in the world. In these pieces of digital morphed images, Orlan's face and skin become the ultimate site of "artificial otherness" (Viola 47), this time othernesses taken from other cultures, from other time periods, creating intercultural monstrosity. Throughout the three series -*Self-Hybridations Précolombiennes, Self-Hybridations Africaines* and *Self-Hybridations Amérindiennes*- Orlan embraces radical forms of bodily exchange that these various 'others' offer. Subsequently her perceived disfigurement and bodily irregularities such as the bulbous foreheads, grossly distorted noses and scarifications reveal a monstrous difference, facial metamorphoses in terms of monstrous becomings. By means of endless alteration and multiplication the digital realm offers, Orlan experiences a disintegration of self that frees her from conventional experience and is steered towards an ambiguous, anomalous and heterogeneous state, intermingling with the presence of others in an ongoing process of becoming-other. Through the facial connections she configures between her own surgically altered face

and the facial masks of different races and cultures, Orlan destabilizes the separation of individuals into distinct categories and presents their potent fusions that can endlessly be modulated. These digital works show us that bodies are made and remade through their couplings with various bodies of different physio-psycho-sociological origins. It is for this reason, *Self-Hybridizations* series highlights a plural aesthetics and hints at a multiplicity of selves that are freed from the borders of skin. According to Orlan, they "have a relationship with the body which is particularly disturbing for us, which completely challenges us and which is very intense...This is the idea of entering into the skin of the other" (qtd in Ayers 177). By "entering into the skin of the other", Orlan brings an important dimension into the picture, namely the possibilities of a mutational and interconnected form of existence, the active process of subject formation, dissolution and reformation in contact with others, both human and non-human. The self, in this series, once again becomes an uncontained matter that oversteps onto the territories of other bodies. In other words, Orlan is disassembling and reassembling her subjectivity through innovatively engaging with multiple selves in a multitude of variations. These composite images evidently imply a relationship with non-humanity and enact creative multiple outcomes, the body as a site of multiplicity, by exceeding the confinement of discretely bounded and individualized understanding of selves. Subsequently, it is these experimental mutations, amalgamations and the radical interdependence of human and non-human dimensions, that make Orlan's work resonate with Deleuzian body which is inseparable from non-human

forces and open to becomings that make manifest "an inhumanity immediately experienced in the body as such" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 273).



Fig. 32. Orlan with her *Self-Hybridizations* Series, 2000.



Fig. 33. Orlan with her *Self-Hybridizations* Series, 2007.

By undermining the stability and coherency of the subject, and opening the body to the intrusion of others, Orlan further contributes to Deleuze's discussions which are preoccupied with colliding the self/other split. Her experiments with becoming-other, the monstrous-technological becomings she undergoes, bring her to a threshold state from which new formations in living and active participation in the world emerge. Through transformative encounters with divergent forces of life that typify Deleuze's notion of becoming, Orlan enters into monstrous-technological-non-human

becomings, hence is involved in ceaselessly changing forms of life. She might be said to achieve a destratification from conventional forms of organization by opening up her flesh to the engendering encounters with others and the world. Enacting a subject that can "represent its own spontaneity only as an Other" (Deleuze 1994: 58) and live "like an Other within itself" (Deleuze 1994: 86), I contend that, Orlan subsequently actualizes the Deleuzian subject.

Deleuze's conception of the arts constitutes an integral part of his philosophy and has specific relevance to better understand various facets of Orlan's work. Deleuze highlights the potential of art to go beyond conventional forms of perception and ordinary experience. For him, as well as for Guattari, art practices are only valued by the extent to which they become "the pure process that never ceases to reach the fulfillment as it proceeds- art as 'experimentation' " (1983: 371). Artistic invention then, is fundamentally an engagement with creative experimentation and exploration that will open up to alternative modes of thinking and being. This can only be achieved by rupturing the established, stabilized organizations to allow the conditions wherein open-ended transformations, new configurations and subsequently alternative worlds can emerge:

> Experimentation by its nature breaks free of the past and dismantles old assemblages (social formations, the Self) and constructs line of flight or movements of deterritorialization by effecting new and previously untried combinations of persons, forces and things, "the new, the remarkable, and interesting. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 111)

An artwork produced this way is not predicated on settled identities and core essences as totalizing or unifying principle and has the power to create

enlivening possibilities away from habitual formations and determinate organizations, hence actualizes points of creative becoming. Art, then, "is the opening up of the universe to becoming-other" (Grosz 2008: 23), or as Deleuze and Guattari would say, it is the passage "from the finite to the infinite" (1994: 180). It is in this respect that, the task of the artist is to transform, to take us towards this realm of becoming-other, towards new territories. Such a practice as Adrian Parr details, "aims at producing encounter" and it "aspires to bring a variety of elements and forces into relation with one another" (26). He further stresses that for Deleuze, "art at its most creative mutates as it experiments, producing new paradigms of subjectivity" (147). Indeed, according to Deleuze, it is only with the production of alliances and active participation with the outside, that the subjectivity can be constituted.

Deleuze's attention to experimentation and mutating forms in art to defy familiar and recognizable forms of perception, provides further details for characterizing Orlan's art as a site of corporeal experimentation that dismantles conventional ways of thinking about body and identity, and one that allows for an exploration of metamorphic possibilities on both ontological and aesthetic levels. By undermining the usual constructions of the body as well as the coherency and rigidity of the self-contained subject, Orlan ruptures the already existing, static modes of organizations. In doing so, she becomes capable of creating metamorphic undoing of fixed forms of the body, an experimentation in living against the strata that bind her. In

other words, Orlan's work can be conceptualized as a non-traditional art practice that allows for mutative decomposition of the body in flux, and in doing so, obliges us to think about our conventional ways of being in the world. Ultimately it presents itself as a form of art practice that stretches for what is possible rather than representing what is familiar or identifiable, and gives way for the production of alternative, stranger and more fluid and experimental modes of being by engaging in an explorative process of mutation through multiple connections with the outside. In sum, it is open to experiment. Through these bodily experimentations, Orlan actively becomes involved in her own self-creation and within this creative participation with the world, her subjectivity is constituted in a non-dualistic, non-hierarchical, interdependent process.

Deleuze's writings have creative interaction with and offer many insights into various arts, painting in particular. In order to have a better understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions of becoming-other and BwO in artistic sense, one should look for a brief analysis of Deleuze's major critical study on the work of English painter Francis Bacon, whose paintings provide creative visual correlates of BwO and becoming-other, particularly becoming-animal. Although they work on different mediums, there are some striking parallels between some of Deleuze's approach to Bacon's paintings which undo the fixed codes of the body through metamorphic figures and Orlan's malleable, unformed flesh during her surgical performances. Therefore, a brief consideration of the way Deleuze connects Bacon's art to

his own way of philosophizing in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, may suggest how we can extend these becomings and BwOs beyond the field of painting to Orlan's surgical practice, to elucidate what is taking place in the seemingly bizarre world of the operating-theatre. To put another way, it is my contention that the set of relations between the raw bloody matter in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan* and Deleuze's general theory of art can effectively be explored through Bacon's images.

Deleuze's interest in the disruption of the body's organic unity and mutation of the human form can also be seen in Bacon's paintings, whom he thinks admirably captures the processes of becoming and their metamorphic possibilities. According to Deleuze, Bacon whose primary subject matter is the human body, has a distinct style that indicates a breakdown of conventional norms of the body as a unified, coherent figure, by taking the path of defiguration of the human subject, as he remarks; "An intense movement flows through the whole body, a deformed and deforming movement…" (1992: 14). He appreciates the manner in which Bacon continuously attempts to deform the ideals of unity and integrity of human figure, and the way his paintings render unstable the boundaries between the inside and outside of the body, between the inner self and outside world by overflowing into the surrounding terrains. Shattering the sovereign organization of the human body and subjecting it to a series of deformations and contortions, Bacon also undermines any fixed and predetermined notion of identity and transforms it into fluid scenes of transformation and

becoming. Losing its contour, the body then, engages in the domain of BwO and is caught up in the processes of becoming-other, particularly becoming-animal.

In a similar fashion to Bacon's canvases, where recognizable bodily forms are deformed and shapes lose their determinacy, Orlan's body, the moment the scalpel cuts its well-defined contours, becomes captured in a web of becomings and BwO. From this position, Deleuze's comments on Bacon's paintings find a parallel in the incessant body modifications of Orlan who constructs deformations and violations of bodily integrity, and opens this mutating flesh for the spectator. Her fluid states of transformation during the surgeries oppose the ideals of unity of human form, hence break with the conventional organization of an embodied subject. Punctuating the self-containment of her body, Orlan takes the body into unexplored territories and offers an open body that permeates and is permeated by the world. If we extend Deleuze's way of thinking about Bacon to the terrain of *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, it can be argued that, being relieved from the confining organization of the self, Orlan in a similar way to Bacon, possesses the same power to experiment with unprecedented possibilities and diverse forms of life.

It is at this point necessary to turn to Deleuze and Guattari's discussions of specific forms of becoming in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which they introduce 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-imperceptible' along with a number of

other becomings on the way to BwO. These various forms of becomings which implicate novel relations to the animals, to the world, to natural and artificial bodies, articulate Deleuze and Guattari's transformative politics. According to Lorraine, they make us "continually engage in destratifying from stable forms of organization" and articulating these becomings "not only demonstrates our ongoing participation with nonhuman as well as human processes but also indicates new possibilities in self- and world-transformation" (181). Becoming-animal is among the most relevant concepts to this study because of the unusual way it reconfigures the subject. The notion of becoming-animal interferes with the human/animal dichotomy of Western thought which reinforces the hierarchical, binary processes and 'othering', it rather brings to the fore the radically interdependent and interconnected nature of existence by producing novel configurations. It entails "thinking in strange, fluid, unusual terms … It is not a question of being this or that sort of human, but of becoming inhuman, of a universal animal becoming" (Deleuze 1995:11). Becoming-animal then, is a destratification of the subject from the realm of fixity and stability, and transforms it into an amorphous and transitory self whose mode of existence is rhizomatic. In relation to this radical disruption of the rigid boundaries between self and other, Deleuze and Guattari write that; "It is always with the Anomalous… that one enters into alliance to become-animal" (1987: 244). Furthermore, they make it clear that becoming-animal, along with other forms of becoming, do not proceed by resemblance or imitation; "Becoming is not to imitate or identify with something or someone" (1987: 272), rather it

is "a motion of transformation and linkage, of conjunction rather than imitation" (Deleuze and Parnet 56), in which the subject enters into relation and becomes contaminated with animal fragments and forces, causing it to break with its habitual configurations: "In an animal–becoming a man and animal combine, neither of which resembles the other, neither of which imitates the other, each deterritorializing the other… A system of relay and mutations through the middle" (Deleuze and Parnet 50). Further on, in his discussion of Deleuzian becoming-animal, Bogue defines this process as "an unspecifiable, unpredictable disruption of codes takes place alongside animals in a metamorphic zone between fixed identities" (2003: 35).

Many of Bacon's figures, through bodily mutations and disrupting their organic unity, constitute a general "becoming-animal which is not confined to a process of a mimetic relation between man and animal, but of a zone of indiscernability, of undecidability" (Deleuze 1992: 20). This zone of indiscernibility reveals the "flesh or meat" that Deleuze calls "the common fact" of both human and the animal (1992: 21). Through Bacon's strategy to dismantle the human subject, the deformed and disorganized body starts to turn into a piece of meat that reveals the carnal dimension of the body and the common zone of man and the beast. For Deleuze, then, Bacon paints the indeterminate area, the in-between space between man and the beast, between human and non-human, between figuration and disfiguration by depicting a mass of meat, bone, blood and nerve, particularly in his butcher-shop images. Since the figure no longer becomes a space of recognizable,

discernible entity, it ultimately gives way to a becoming-imperceptible; "whatever its importance becoming-animal is only one stage in a more profound becoming-imperceptible in which the figure disappears" (1992: 27).

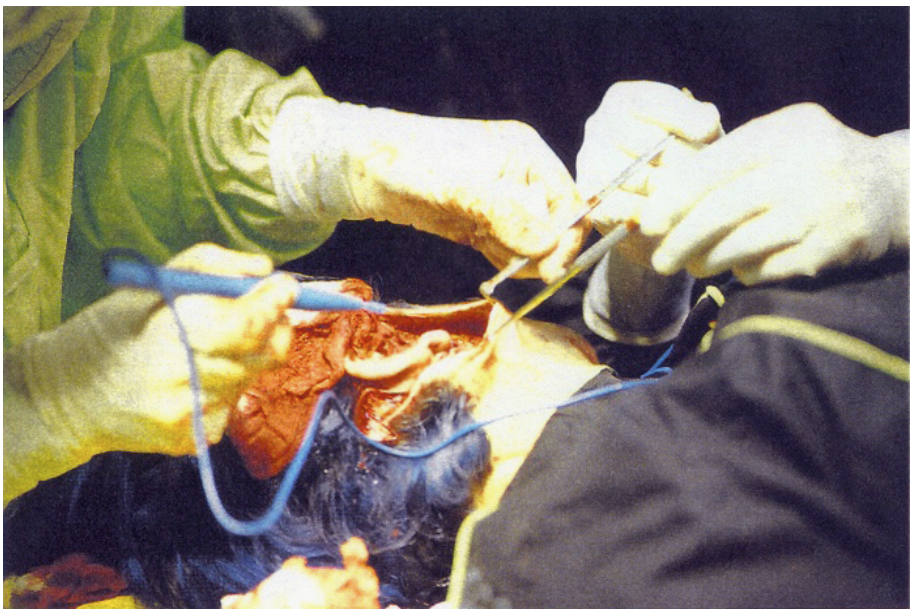


Fig. 34. Close-up of the Opening of the Body During the Seventh Surgery-Performance, November 21, 1993.

The conception of flesh as the intermediate state between man and the beast, between human and non-human and the term "meat" Deleuze advances for the description of Bacon's figures, provide powerful insights into the flayed open and disarranged corporeality of Orlan in *The Reincarnation of St. Orlan*. As the body is peeled off live for the cameras, it reveals the brutishly carnal lying underneath; the raw bloody flesh as a formless matter without any determinate organization. Accordingly, Orlan calls her practice Carnal Art, an art of the 'flesh'. The bloody images of cut-open, carved up, fragmented body are demonstrated in the video footage of *Omnipresence,* particularly in "the image of the surgeon's knife cutting in front of her left ear to lift away

her face from the side of her head" (Ince 80). "As a morphologically shifting site" (Ince 161), Orlan's body exceeds its static grids, fixed codes and coherent features that structure itself in conventional configurations. Since the body as an organization of recognizable and articulable visual elements is disrupted in these processes of re/un-making, she moves beyond discernibility like Bacon's figures. According to O'Bryan, what we get during the operations, "is a mass of indecipherable, unknowable, unpossessable interior body stuff" (105). With the internal viscera; mass of organs, muscles, tissue and bone, her bleeding and cut-open body lying on the operating table offers itself inexorably as meat. Another way to put this would be to say that, by assuming various mutant shapes and contours that supersede the recognizable features of the human and returning the eye to the rawness of flesh within this process of metamorphosis, Orlan shows human being is just a piece of meat. Hence, by surgically transforming itself, her body as a mutative and unformed visual matter reveals the common zone between man-beast-animal that Deleuze mentions, "a zone of objective indiscernability or indeterminability between two forms, one of which was no longer, and the other, not yet…" (1992: 126-7), an intermediary state that "makes it impossible to say where the boundary between the human and animal lies" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 273).

It is crucial to see that, within these practices, rather than turning into an animal, Orlan submits herself to a process of metamorphosis during which her body is infected with traces of animal existence and reveals their

common zone of undecidability, wherein it is no longer quite certain whether this refers to human or beast. The body, as something distorted, uncoordinated, unnatural without shape, indicates a mutative process in which a becoming-meat passes into a becoming-animal. The moment the meat starts to emerge beneath the human form, the body is directly infused with animal-becomings, hence crosses the rigid boundary that divides humanity from animality. The zones of proximity between the human and animal that Deleuze associates with the body as meat in Bacon's work, therefore, begins to sound very much like the extreme fleshiness in the self-transformational surgery performances of Orlan, during which the binary between the two states no longer holds. It could further be argued that, Orlan's body outside of dualist logic becomes open to difference within a disturbingly in-between state; the fusion of human and animal. No longer trapped into exclusionary categories of subjectivity, Orlan then, creates resonances among man and animals that promise multiple perspectives on life as well as multiplicity of differences. Within the zones of indiscernibility Orlan constructs, she in fact releases otherness; animality, monstrosity from the binary structure that opposes them to human beings. The way Orlan aggressively performs her body as meat during the operations inscribes her bodily territory with animality and monstrosity. This passage from identifiable entities toward something unknown and unnatural, signals her departure from a self-involved and more ordinary life-form and suggests a continuity among human and nonhuman species. Being drawn into a becoming-other, her territory might be said to cut across the territories of

other species, forming what Deleuze and Guattari call "interspecies junction points" (1994: 185). Taking these into consideration, it can ultimately be claimed that, these animal and monstrous becomings bring about an intensification of embodied experience.

In order to challenge conventional forms and enable various processes of becoming-other in art, Deleuze speaks of artistic forces that we are unaware, and locates the creation of the aesthetic possibility in accessing to the realm of these invisible forces. As Grosz traces from Deleuze; "Art unleashes, intensifies, and celebrates precisely the creative and destructive impact of these vibratory forces on bodies, on collectives, on the earth itself" (61). Lorraine further asserts that body's immersion and participation in these imperceptible forces of life calls for a transformation "which allows us to go beyond the perceptions and conceptions of conventional life" from which "innovative solutions" in life can emerge" (137). For Deleuze, then, an artwork is about an approach to forces, about "summoning" and rendering perceptible "the imperceptible forces that populate the world, that affect us, make us become" (1994: 181-2). This field of transformative forces facilitates vitalizing contact and alliances with the world and non-human others. Deleuze applauds the manner in which Bacon's paintings capture and render visible these invisible forces that play through bodies; "the action of forces upon the body" (1992: 34). By constituting an approach to these intensive forces, Bacon's body undergoes deformations, contortions and metamorphoses, thereby allows the emergence of something new, something

different; enlivening possibilities of becoming-other, with the themes of becoming-animal and becoming-imperceptible. Since Bacon attempts to paint the vibratory forces of deformation that affect figures, Bogue stresses that the malleable flesh in his paintings becomes "a space of metamorphosing forces" (2003: 221).

Such a conceptualization of forces may allow us to the terrains of Orlan's self-transformational surgical project. In a similar fashion to Bacon's bodies, Orlan's artistic act might be said to experiment with forces as well, which for Deleuze creates the BwO, the dismantled body that responds to and is affected by these intensive, transformative forces. One might suggest that, from a Deleuzian perspective, Orlan is attempting to capture the invisible forces that deform and disrupt the bodily forms. Just as Bacon's paintings express the affects of forces on the body, her flesh during the operations is always in motion, responding to and transforming in relation to these forces of mutation and deformation. The body then becomes a zone of active forces, it resonates or vibrates with them, which provides her with the potential of becoming-other, becoming-animal, becoming-monstrous, becoming-imperceptible. According to Braidotti, animals, monsters, machines are among these fields of forces or territories of becoming (2001: 198). The forces, whatever their nature, enter the human body and propel transformations, affections and non-human becomings of the subject, by bringing it into a state of indetermination and indiscernibility. Hence, within such a conceptualization, opening up the body to the forces of animality,

monstrosity and otherness; the forces of becoming-other, both in surgical and digital realm, Orlan's body undergoes metamorphoses and experiences strange, non-human becomings. In relation to Deleuzian aesthetics, this might be summed up as making visible of the invisible forces populating the world, as Deleuze might say, "harnessing forces" (1992: 39). As an individual who is never separate from the world of imperceptible forces and continually transforming with them, Orlan provokes an art that is able to mingle with these transformative forces, therefore challenges the conventional experience of an embodied subject by fostering alternative aesthetic possibilities.

Orlan's animal/monstrous becomings, which are enacted through an approach to the forces of outside, surely indicate a threshold to non-human transformations; it is from these zones of indistinction Orlan's non-human becomings arises. Grosz points out to Deleuze's emphasis on the non-human dimension of the aesthetic, by arguing how the "the inhuman forces" which the human borrows from the world, "may serve in its self-transformation and overcoming" (2008: 77). According to Deleuze an Guattari, art extracts "...the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man's nonhuman becomings…" (1994: 183) and connects the living to the nonorganic forms. Orlan's becomings are precisely non-human, because instead of using the body as her artistic medium to represent an ordinary and familiar experience, she explores the terrain beyond the human through monstrous, technological and animal becomings that deform her body and connect it to the realm of alterity. As a matter of fact, Orlan as a human, "summons up"

something non-human, overcomes herself through "nonhuman becomings of man" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169) and makes herself a work of art by bringing creative becomings into being. We might say then that, Orlan parallels Deleuze's aesthetic project of thinking beyond human, which opens the subject to the realization of otherness. Both projects involve putting human in contact with the imperceptible forces of outside, which transforms our habitual sense of selves and our conventional experience of the world. This, in turn, could be construed as the kind of zones of interaction "hovering between the animal and the human, between the earth and territory, that Deleuze has claimed is the basis of all the arts" (Grosz 2008: 100).

In order to better understand the various facets of the BwO constructed by Orlan during the series of surgery-performances, it is once more useful to approach them through Bacon's images which provide striking visualizations of BwO. For Deleuze, the human form as a metamorphic figure in Bacon's canvases which is achieved by dismantling its structural organization "is precisely the body without organs" (1992: 33). BwO, as further developed by Deleuze in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation,* is the zone that takes place at the intersection of the linkages between the body and the wider field of invisible forces. It is the site of "the meeting of the wave with Forces acting on the body" (1992: 34). Deleze and Guattari's BwO as expressed in *Francis Bacon*, does not mean the absence of organs, rather the organs lose their determinate character, they become provisional and shifting

with varying functions: "The body without organs is a series with indeterminate organs, or with temporary, transitory organs" (Boundas 13). Whenever the body encounters these vibratory external forces, a provisional organ emerges. In other words, the body vibrates with the encountered forces which determine these temporary organs on itself:

> An organ will hence be determined by that encounter, but a provisional organ, which lasts only as long as the passage of the wave and the action of the force, and which will shift its position in order to settle elsewhere. (1992: 34)

These unspecified, transitional organs that we see in Bacon's deformations of the human body can be exemplified as a nose that changes into a pig's snout, or the mouth from which the scream emerges.

The notion of indeterminate or provisional organs accounts not just for the mutative forms of Bacon, but also for Orlan's surgical experiments during which she is apparently disappearing and reappearing in altered states. In the moments of medical dissembly and reassembly of her bodily territory, unspecified organs with multiple and contradictory functions emerge and then disappear. Her flesh which is lifted from the body it belongs, opens the paths for novel and creative uses; new orifices with varying functions. The image of the surgical incision, the previously mentioned *Second Mouth*, as a locus of deformation, provides a fitting illustration of the provisional organ Deleuze describes, which is determined at the point a vibratory force is exerted on the body, a rendering visible of an invisible force. This bloody second mouth, as a transitory bodily orifice into the wetter interiors of the body, contradicts with what is familiar and recognizable. Orlan's BwO, then,

does have 'organs' in a sense, but only provisional organs "which lasts only as long as the passage of the wave and the action of the force" (Deleuze 1992: 34). As provisional organs emerge within the malleable flesh, Orlan's animal-becomings, monstrous-becomings take place.

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming ends with 'becoming-imperceptible'. Or else, becoming-imperceptible is the ultimate becoming toward which other becomings rush (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279). Becoming-imperceptible breaks out of all identifications and significations in any static and essentialist sense, it dissolves them until the point where they are no longer recognizable or discernible. In her discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-imperceptible, Lorraine argues that this conception entails leaving behind the perceptible boundaries of the body and conventional understanding of oneself and of the world. (189)

To transpose this vocabulary onto our discussion of Orlan would be to describe these zones of indetermination she creates, as a movement toward imperceptibility, indiscernibility and impersonality. In the moments of bloody dissembling, de- and reconstruction, Orlan as a personal subject, becomes barely perceptible, on the verge of disappearing. O'Bryan observes that, at the moment of Orlan's skin is cut, peeled away from her head and lifted by the surgeon, her opened body becomes "unidentifiable as belonging to one individual" (97). Publicly flayed, she says, "Orlan's personal body appears to become nonpersonal and unidentifiable" (97). The bodily traits

and its fixed coordinates are disorganized up to the point that the images no longer have a reference to a coherent sense of personal self, they do not employ an identifiable, recognizable form of the social field. The aesthetic experience of her operations, in other words, achieves a break out from the familiar, articulable forms so that she can no longer remain on the level of recognition. Being no longer an object of recognition, Orlan defies being classified and identified by pursuing the movement of becomings. This dismantling is radically demonstrated in a number of the large photographic plates and video footage from *Omnipresence*. As they explicitly reveal, these images are on their way to becoming indiscernable and with indiscernable boundaries between what is inside and what is outside the body, Orlan experiences the process of becoming-imperceptible. In Deleuzian terms, she becomes "the form of something whose matter was molecularized, imperceptible, unassignable" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 197).

3.2 Debate on Harlequin's Coat:

This chapter concludes the discussion with a brief analysis of Orlan's most recent work *Harlequin's Coat* within the context of Deleuze's theory. As the artist enters a new phase in her work, she becomes increasingly engaged with and gives shape to the concepts and concerns that Deleuze's philosophy deals with. *Harlequin's Coat,* as a highly experimental work, has even more striking resonances with the definitions of symbiotic becomings and machinic assemblages offered by Deleuze and Guattari.



Fig. 35. Orlan, Conference on *Harlequin's Coat*, Ontario College of Art & Design, Toronto, Ontario, September 30, 2008.

As Orlan frequently remarks, Carnal Art is not just about cosmetic surgery but also about other advanced techniques in biotechnologies and biogenetics that raise questions related to the status of the body and the future generations. In relation to this she argues; "Up till now we have only been able to change our appearance, but with genetic manipulation we will be capable of deeper changes" (qtd in Viola 91). With this present exhibition Orlan constructs a complex biotechnological environment in which the relationship between the self and the other is even more deeply investigated. With this long-term project that again emphasizes the fluidity of existence arising from the idea of "the acceptance of other within oneself" under the metaphor of Harlequin figure (Orlan 2008: 87), the body extends even more towards other bodies and goes to such extremes to become 'other' by using

the carnal medium of cells of diverse origins. By mixing cells of different races and species including the artist's own skin cells, along with the non-living matter, Orlan initiates complex alliances between organic and inorganic worlds and displaces all fixed notions of entities. The dissolved margins between different forms of life make room for a rich complex of strange encounters and ultimately shifts the very ground of being.

This ongoing project of processual creation, with its strange, unpredictable amalgamations between heterogeneous bodies have profound parallels with *A Thousand Plateaus* with its unfamiliar terminology related to inter-species couplings and cross fertilizations. In *Harlequin's Coat*, Orlan dismantles our most reassuring assumptions about the boundaries of life and clear delineations between bodies by investigating their symbiotic relationship as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, who themselves reject the purity of species, and instead advocate for "fusions of cells originating in different species" (1987: 10). According to them, "it is the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms…"(1987: 238). In order to challenge the notions of pure autonomous entities, closed systems and organic units such as genes, cells, human, animal and organisms, Deleuze and Guattari supply the example of a type C virus, with its double connection to the DNA of a baboon and of certain kinds of domestic cats. (1987: 10) If we recall their various discussions of becoming-other in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the becoming-baboon of the cat, once again, does not mean that the cat imitates the baboon, but rather concerns a symbiotic

becoming which operates in the zone of the indistinction or indetermination, and a heterogeneous coupling between previously disjointed lines, as they write: "We form a rhizome with our viruses, or rather our viruses cause us to form a rhizome with our animals" (1987: 10). These indefinite, unspecified zones that are activated by symbiotic becomings, Rajchman asserts, "escape oppositions or contradictions" (56) by linking distinct layers of matter and "include such potential for other worlds" in which we enter into new relations with others (84).

Not afraid of their joint kinship, Orlan provides an unnerving insight into diverse couplings out of the confining forms of organic units; encounters among human, animal, cells, technology, organic and artificial, and how it becomes impossible to arrange any clear ontological divisions between these seemingly disparate forms, by investigating the symbiotic capacities Deleuze mentions. Through these unnatural and strange encounters initiated by scientific and biotechnical technologies, allegedly fixed, distinct entities enter into dispersion and destabilization; various human races and other species become biologically and technologically symbiotic. Since these symbiotic becomings cut across the boundaries of organic boundaries of species, types, zoological and biological classifications, this mixed-media installation introduces an indeterminate, ambiguous dimension; the creation of indiscernable spaces of transition that do not distinguish between humans, other beings and things, animate and inanimate worlds. *Harlequin's Coat,* then, might be conceptualized as situating itself in the intermingling and

intermediate milieus of Deleuzian rhizomes that bring different life forms, the living and the non-living, self and other, individual and environment into direct contact with each other, and allow them all to pass into a creative becoming. Within these rhizomatic/symbiotic fields, dualities merge together in a ceaseless flow and possibilities of novel configurations and mutational existence are opened up; as heterogeneous forms, each element undergoes various degrees of transformation within the process of co-cultivation and remains in the process of becoming-other, by serving as "thresholds and doors" for affecting each another simultaneously (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 249). Always crossing into one another, the boundaries which ensue the separate and settled entities begin to collapse into an extended space of rhizomatic connectivities and strange amalgamations, which suffuse the writings of Deleuze. *Harlequin's Coat* helps us envisage fusional spaces composed of different multiplicities in which human, animal, technical and scientific apparatus, textile and furniture design elements are weaved together with strange thresholds and hybrid forms. These radical forms of bodily exchanges and novel ways of interacting between different realities open space for the emergence of new formations and encourage us to realize the potential of further becomings in favor of new generative possibilities in life. To put another way, Orlan's exercise of embracing "the acceptance of other within oneself", in fact, explores new possibilities and forms in living out of the overly constricting structures in which we currently find ourselves, by means of transformations and becomings in concert with others. This kind of conceptualization ultimately defies the arborescent-tree

like structures, that Deleuze sees as dominating and restricting our ways of thinking about the logic of life.

Within this installation in-process, Orlan immerses herself in larger flow of life at the level of carnal medium of cells; as a human she constantly reaches for something else and becomes more than herself through encounters with other animate and inanimate elements. By reaching out and constituting itself in the external world, the limits between the body and the world are erased, the body becomes this very world. More precisely as Deleuze and Guattari would say; "We become with the world…We become universes" (1994: 169). It can further be argued that, this 'becoming with the world', or else, the indiscernable, indeterminate spaces initiated by these strange encounters, are tied up with the transformation of the bodies possibly to the point of imperceptibility. More accurately, their metamorphosis, dispersion and amalgamation with one another tend toward becoming-imperceptible.

With increased overlaps between elements borrowed from the matters of the living and non-living; technologies, biogenetics, biology, philosophy, design, fashion, different human races, cells of different origins and species, viewers as active participants etc., *Harlequin's Coat* is, once more, distinctly rhizomatic. In a highly collaborative endeavor, Orlan attempts to combine, or rather assemble, the apparently disparate ideas, forms and things together. In her own words, in this project she aimed to "make cells of different origins and species cohabit: we might say that design, style, decoration, etc., would

be different disciplines, but they would form part of a porous whole connected with contemporary art" (qtd in Tejeda).

This porous whole Orlan defines, can be best described as an experimental assemblage of heterogeneous terms whose base is a Deleuzian logic of multiplicity; a creative alliance of unlikely elements that functions through human-animal symbiosis, animal-animal symbiosis, human-technology symbiosis, or as Deleuze and Guattari may describe through "unnatural participations" that span across kingdoms and types of entirely different scales (1987: 240). In that sense, *Harlequin's Coat* as a perplexing and slightly macabre assemblege, might be conceptualized as a complex folding of heterogenous flows. Within this assembled space, a limitless range of mutations and variations might emerge through the processes of co-culturing, merging and amalgamating of different forms of life. Orlan, in this current project seems to aspire what Deleuze refers to as "complexes of coexistence" (1994: 186); multiple worlds that co-exist together without recourse to any individuated existence; to closed, completed and separate unities. This emphasis on the coexistence of multiple and disparate bodies and perspectives, without becoming a unifying totality might be said to release us from the heaviness of settled and unitary entities/identities and conventional formations. Hence, within a Deleuzian conceptualization, it points toward the emergence of other possible worlds, and is the most evident proof of the transition from a pure unity to a logic of multiplicity. As a matter of fact, the overall exhibition emerges as a "multiplicity [which]

must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system" (Deleuze 1994: 182). Put another way, *Harlequin's Coat* is made up of multiplicities that precede Orlan and other life-forms as self-enclosed, autonomous, distinct entities, rather its form of operation consists of complexifying encounters that reach out and flow in all directions, and subsequently generate assemblages out of a multiplicity of differences without a homogenizing power imposed on them. Subsequently, the installation foregrounds "the variety of multiplicity – in other words, difference" (Deleuze 1994: 182).

In the final analysis, it is critical in fact to see that, life becomes indefinite and impersonal in *Harlequin's Coat* because elements cease to be individualized specificities within themselves and their sense of self-containment is disrupted, instead they become decentered and function together as peripheral components within these exchanges, flows and interrelations. It is in these respects that, within the uncentered, indeterminate and assembled spaces of *Harlequin's Coat*, a different understanding of selves and the world emerges. As a space of fluidity, the installation opens the pathways for new forms of living and a multiplicity of possible worlds. Deleuze's model, which defines selves on the periphery rather than at the centre, in their exteriority rather than interiority, and which delineates life-forms always in mutual contact with their surrounding terrains, has intriguing parallels with and many insights into Orlan's work which enables us to explore an open-ended

and dynamic process of impersonal and preindividual collectivity that resists any hierarchical categorization. It appears logical to conclude that, *Harlequin's Coat* presents a certain overcoming of the separation of life-forms' from each other and from the world, thus might be seen as an affirmation of Deleuze's attempts "to make life something more than personal, to free life from what imprisons it" (1995: 143).

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION: FINAL ANALYSIS

This thesis represents an exploration into the dynamics of Orlan's art practice within a Deleuzian framework, in order to take his conceptual resources into other realms; the milieus of the artist's complex body project and allow these fields to produce encounters with Deleuze's philosophy. While concentrating primarily on the *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* and the subsequent *Self-Hybridizations*, attention is also given to her latest project *Harlequin's Coat.* This thesis begins with a discussion of Orlan's place in and contribution to performance based body art and then looks at Carnal Art in more detail. It then moves on to engage with discussing the complex philosophical issues Orlan's ouevre addresses, mainly within the context of hugely important theory of becoming formulated by Deleuze and Guattari. In my view, it is the notion of becoming that seems to encapsulate most fully the continual change Orlan experiences, and capture the transformative potential of her body's experimental, ongoing, explorative and innovative process of forming and reforming, that recognizes the constitutive effect of others. By turning to the theories of becoming put forward by Deleuze and Guattari, throughout this thesis, the basically unstable, transitional and non-unitary position of her body/subject that exceeds the rigidity of normality, fixity and completion is recognized.

Orlan is the artist of becoming and her art is an art of alteration; it makes us aware of the creation of a space of dynamic becomings in which she never ceases to mutate and become-other. Elsewhere in this thesis, I have pointed to the ways in which the artist goes beyond traditional assumptions in which bodies are formulated as closed, bounded and fixed unities according to preconceived grids and fixed organizations, through approaching embodiment as a never ending process of becoming. In doing so, she points toward the possibility of potential liberation of bodies and brings a new range of alternative possibilities and forms into existence, by promoting productive processes of bodily becomings, ambiguity, difference and fluidity.

It is crucial in fact to see that, Orlan draws her strength from being involved in her own processual self-creation and opening up new productive possibilities of becoming-other, instead of stagnating and solidifying into an individualized, fixed, stable, hence a restricted category of identity. Her practice offers a model of the self that has almost an infinite ability to flow in different directions, to connect and fuse with its constitutive outside as a part of its own multiplicity, hence points towards a freer existence. One might say that it is this very openness to the world and its vital generative forces, in other words, the contact with the outside, that gives Orlan's art its particular character. Orlan, then, as an artist, remains "a seer, a becomer," whose artistic creativity "is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat" (Deleuze and

Guattari 1994: 171). Considering her complex body project as an attempt to extend beyond its borders to intermingle with other bodies, spaces and the world, or else, to incorporate exteriority out of conventional human experience that Deleuze describes, increases the critical power of her work drastically, and displays that her disruptive goals go far beyond feminist issues in terms of the transformative potential of her art. As a matter of fact, the core of Orlan's ouevre is defined as the reality of Deleuzian 'becoming': the quest for the constant process of transformation, and a permanent openness to change and difference; to new and challenging ways in living against the static, hence the repressive nature of 'being'. Orlan, then, might be said to embody what Deleuze calls as the only real form of being: the "being of becoming" (1994: 41).

In keeping with the theme of becoming, it can effectively be argued that, what makes Orlan so extraordinary is her Deleuzian 'nomadic' understanding of the self and her ability to create a nomadic space; to move beyond herself into new, unexplored terrains that are not governed by a settled and grounded understanding of identity, instead in which the possibility of some very productive couplings and linkages with other bodies are explored; the uninhabited places where the boundaries between the self and the other are breached. According to a Deleuzian perspective, these are the territories of the nomadic, the spaces of fluidity and connectivity: "The nomadic trajectory distributes people (or animals) in an open space...one without division into shares, in a space without borders or enclosure"

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 420). Deleuze and Guattari's notion of nomadism constitutes a central motif for *A Thousand Plateaus,* and involves wandering into unimagined terrains and creating new pathways, where the nature of the journey is not predetermined with a specific end-point, instead is open-ended where continuous movement is primary. It also has liberating effects, a liberation from all forms of control; alternative understandings of bodies and subjectivities as connecting and encountering with one another in new and multiple ways. In relation to this, Bogue asserts that the subject living in this nomadic mode is "a mobile locus of becoming commingling identities" (1989: 95). Nomads, then, are free to roam; they use their mobility to flee from conventions and established, dominant structures by creating new actualizations of becoming and inventing new possibilities in living, without congealing into a settled identity. By disturbing the rigid boundaries and displaying an openness to encounters; to the outside, they creatively and freely engage in intermediary areas, in-betweens, thereby open up alternative worlds: "The life of the nomad is the intermezzo" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 380).

It is my contention that, Deleuze's notion of nomadic existence may effectively capture the body/subject of Orlan that expresses a radical openness to change and transformation, by opening up new lines of connectivity with all possible others and constantly shifting as a result of these interactions. Transposing Deleuze's vocabulary to Orlan's project allows us to see how people could engage in living nomadically at the level

of embodied subjectivity. As I have explored throughout this work, the ongoing metamorphosis Orlan undergoes, demonstrates that she is not seeking to maintain the unity of integrated, coherent self and disrupts the sense of self-contained and independent individual, revealing a self that is instead open to potentialities of change, connectivity and experimentation. Orlan's commitment to relentless change, bodily experimentation and fluidity of becoming continually resists settled and fixed perspectives towards the self and dismantles the overly constrictive forms of subjectivity; the fixed and stable borders of bodily territory and the fixing of identity in a closed body, regulated into a unified subjectivity. Her identity then, is never still, always in motion, in becoming-other, and her journey is not directed towards a final destination. More significantly, her mode of existence is rhizomatic and nomadic, or as Davis might say, "Who she is, is in constant flux" (29). Orlan, then, becomes a nomad who is wandering to "become-other" than who she is, and her emphasis on the "itinerant, shifting, changing" (Orlan qtd in Obrist 202) identities constitutes a parallel project to the nomadic vision of subjectivity theorized by Deleuze and Guattari.

Such nomadic understanding can lead to what Deleuze and Guattari describe as "lines of flight"; paths of release or movements away from the strata; from coagulated and rigidified structures of all sorts, such as the unified and stable sense of self (1987: 55). Lines of flight are the radical routes of escape from the hierarchy-producing structures, and for Deleuze, the aim should always be finding a way out of them, dismantling the mechanisms of order

and control, freeing up lines of flight: "You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight" (1987: 9). Lorraine further describes a line of flight as "a flow of movement that breaks with conventional social codes in the creation of new forms of life" (116). From this point of view, we can understand that, going beyond a hierarchized, unified subject with stable corporeal boundaries and the limits of conventional configuration of human existence towards something much more flexible and fluid, Orlan not only opens the way to a nomadic subjectivity but also facilitates possibilities for opening up lines of flight that carry her into the realms of alternative possibilities of becoming-other, creative experimentation and active engagement with the world. From this position, her complex project of processual self-creation might be conceptualized as a liberated practice that sets her free from conventional experience, and allows Deleuze's theories and concepts develop in creative forms, with her the ability to radically break with the boundaries and categories dictated by hierarchical structures, stratified formations and the mechanisms of order that seek to stabilize the parameters of corporeal self. Her artistic probings, then, begin to move towards the intensities of Deleuze's rhizomatic, multiple and uncontained style. Hence, within such a conceptualization, it is my forecast that, Orlan is fully in line with Deleuze and Guattari's call to; "…form a rhizome, increase your territory by deterritorialization, extend the line of flight…" (1987: 11).

Along with the theory of becoming, throughout this thesis, I have searched for the ways to theorize Orlan's practice and establish its connections to

Deleuze's dense body of literature through his formulations of rhizome, as a radical disruption of binary reasoning and an adoption of a more flexible thinking. Within such a space of flexibility and fluidity, according to Deleuze and Guattari, lies the possibility for transformation and the old boundaries of static beings make room "for other becomings, 'other contemporaneous possibilities'" (1987: 273). The unique interactions with multiple and diverse bodies and the resulting alternative forms of alliance that suggest an interconnected approach to existence, as I have argued, is a major theme within the realm of Orlan's art. As a result of this, Deleuze's notion of rhizomatic space of in-betweenness has provided a viable framework for demonstrating the transformative potential of these connective strategies and practices of Orlan. If one can speak of the individuated existence of Orlan, it is only by means of her connectivity and engagement with the bodies of others. Unlike the kind of individualistic accounts of identity that are clearly distinct and separate from its human and non-human others, Orlan fosters free-flowing connections and linkages with the world, and constitutes herself as open to all possible otherness, that in turn allow her to break from an identity closing upon itself and envisage an in-between space of pure metamorphoses that is premised on the affirmation of creative becomings. As previously explored, the connective and expansive character of Orlan's art lets her enter, more precisely, wander nomadically in the rhizomatic, intermediary spaces imagined by Deleuze and Guattari, which are free of hierarchical structures and conceptual barriers associated with binary thinking, and are instead open territories that are always between the self

and the world. Throughout her oeuvre, Orlan refuses the limitations of dichotomized and oppositional structures, and most often falls outside the assigned, hierarchized and rigidly demarcated identity/bodily categorizations. The approach she develops into the dynamics of her body, subjectivity and art, as this thesis conveys, overcomes the binary logic system by interweaving and blending differing extremes effectively. This way, she begins to embrace "other contemporaneous possibilities" and affirm other modes of life within a space beyond dualisms; the intermezzos of Deleuzian rhizomes. Always being in between one becoming and another, Orlan proposes an alternative model grounded not on oppositions and separations, but on transformation, process and radical forms of exchange between bodies; hence in many ways, her project gives some indication of Deleuze's critique of binarized modes of Western thought and his concern with dismantling the very logic of categories and boundaries that maintains them.

Not engaging in a binary process that sets up hierarchies and categorizations, Orlan provides the potential of inventing radically new forms of existence that emphasize a multiplicity of differences over sameness. Her turn away from the dominant and conventional ways of knowing our bodies, and her body deviating and differing from the tendency toward standardization and homogenization by means of the normative uses of cosmetic surgery, operates as a rupture in the existing social order that direct, regulate and constrain bodies by coding them; the mechanism of capture that imposes uniformity and tries to make people conform to the categories of normalcy.

Following Orlan's Manifesto, we might add that the discourse of Carnal Art, in fact, presents a diversion from the claims of authoritative norms, practices, firmly upheld beliefs and the social orders surrounding human bodies and subjectivities which seek to fix ideas about people and create idealized selves into completed and fixed wholes. By refusing to align to the requirements of the normative usage of the cosmetic surgery, using this medical practice as means of transformation/creation of one's self and decisively breaking with the contemporary cultural norms of ideal self that have dominated the genre, in a sense, the artist brings about a comprehensive destratification of the socially accepted practices of the cosmetic surgery that restrict and mould bodies' differences into rigid and 'appropriate' categories. Thus, she opens the ground for experimentation carried out on the body and creation of alternative arrangements. As a body modified by medical, digital and biotechnologies, Orlan rejects codings on her body and subjectivity by dominant social mechanisms that have been structured around normalcy, she searches for an escape route from the repressive force for conformity and dismantles the hierarchies created by culture's ideals of self.

The reconciliation of these positions reveals that, the strategy and the practice of Orlan have many anti-totalitarian commonalities with the thought of Deleuze, because they are directed at pursuing a release from the authority and domination of totalizing structures, hierarchies and unities that Deleuze sees as confining our true selves. From a Deleuzian standpoint, then, Orlan may be thought to mobilize or release lines of flight from out of the

stratifications, dichotomizations, rigidifications and categorizations society tries to bind and sort her. She points to liberated ways of perceiving the body that have been denied by rigid dualisms and to alternative views of subjectivity which Deleze calls for; that are less oppressive outside the traditional formation of the Western concepts of the individual. She does so by opening up a space for alternative forms of embodiment and new configurations of the human existence in an ever ongoing dynamic process. Orlan then, might be conceptualized as a figure of escape from the oppressive authority of definitions and hierarchizing, stratifying confines of the traditional categories related to the body and identity, allowing for a new openness to life. Definitively, she presents a radically different understanding of body and subjectivity, revealing the fluidity of existence and is involved in the processes/activities that become the materialization of the radical theorizing of Deleuze and Guattari, which provide strategies for undoing the conventional ways of inhabiting the world and for constructing our lives and our own subjectivities differently.

To conclude, I wish to propose that, Orlan's unconventional artwork is creative and effective in its unique ability to explore the possibility of the productive processes of change and the novelty of dynamic becomings, without recourse to the oppressive binary structures, hence to prompt discussion about our bodies and our futures. Orlan's reincarnation is always future-oriented, as O'Bryan suggests, it "puts her in the process of enacting a potential future" (55). As I have pointed out throughout this work, the

'betweenness', the intermezzo space Orlan innovatively creates, is central to her whole oeuvre and perhaps also hints at a future that evades more exclusions, more dualisms and more of the same. Orlan may not change the world single-handedly, but her aesthetic project prompts us to think differently about ourselves, our bodies and the world by envisioning creative alternatives to exist/live and radically transformed futures. Along with a growing number of other contemporary artists, Orlan questions the given system of values and strives to move beyond the boundaries of accepted realities towards the intermezzo spaces of innumerable potential connections and diverse possibilities, perhaps for other artists to occupy in the future. As well as challenging our worldview and self-perception by creating alternative paths of release from structures and forms of human life that are overly constricting, her complex body project indicates the potential for visual artworks to challenge the social, cultural, aesthetic conventions and assumptions received from Western ways of thinking in a critical and analytical manner. Throughout her oeuvre of artistic act, Orlan precisely treats herself as a work of art and provokes conversation by using her body as "a site of public debate" in renewed forms of experimentation that lead to enlivening transformations and new liberating possibilities in life. Bearing in mind her favorite motto, "Remember the Future," ("Carnal Art Manifesto") one might conclude that the dynamic practices of Orlan demonstrate the body's potential to actively promote a future and point to trajectories of future becomings.

REFERENCES

Adams, Parveen. "Operation Orlan." *The Emptiness of the Image: Psychoanalysis and Sexual Differences.* Routledge, 1995.

Allain, Paul and Harvie, Jen. *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance.* Routledge, 2006.

Augsburg, Tanya. "Orlan's Performative Transformations of Subjectivity." *The Ends of Performance.* Ed. Peggy Phelan, Jill Lane. New York and London: NYU Press, 1998.

Auslander, Philip. *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism.* Routledge, 1997.

Ayers, Robert. "Serene and happy and Distant: An Interview with Orlan." Featherstone, Mike. (ed.) *Body Modification.* London: Sage, 2000.

Biehn, Janice. "The Art of Plastic Surgery for Plastic Surgery's Sake." *The Medical Post*, 30 November 1993.

Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze and Guattari.* London and New York: Routledge, 1989.
--- *Deleuze: on Music, Painting, and the Arts.* Routledge, 2003.

Boundas, Constantin. *The Deleuze Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993

Braidotti, Rosi. "How to Endure Intensity: Towards a Sustainable Nomadic Subject." *Micropolitics of Media Culture*. Ed. P. Pisters, Amsterdam: University Press, 2001.

Brand, Peg Zeglin. "Bound to Beauty: An Interview with Orlan." *Beauty Matters.* Indiana University Press, 2000.

Buci-Glucksmann, Christine and Blistene, Bernard. "A Conversation." *Orlan: Carnal Art.* Ed. Schultz-Touge, Christine. Editions Flammarion, 2004.

Clarke, Julie. "The Sacrificial Body of Orlan" *Body and Society.* Volume 5.(2-3), p. 185-207, 1999.

Davis, Kathy. "'My Body is My Art' Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?'" *The European Journal of Women's Studies*. 4, pp. 23-37, 1997.

De la Villa, Rocio. "Orlan's Wardrobe." *Orlan + Davidelfin: Suture, Hybridisation, Recycling*. Ed. De la Villa, Rocio and Cruz Sanchez, Pedro Alberto. Murcia Cultural, 2009.

Deleuze, Gilles. "A Theory of the Other." *The Deleuze Reader*. ed. Constantin V. Boundas. New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1993
--- *Difference and Repetition.* trans. Paul Patton. Continuum, 1994.
--- *Foucault.* trans. Sean Hand. U of Minnesota P, 1988.
--- *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation.* trans. Daniel W. N Smith, 1992.
--- *Negotiations.* trans. Martin Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.
--- "Nomad Thought." trans. and ed. D. Allison. *The New Nietzsche*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1985.
--- *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. trans. Robert Hurley. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1988.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H.R. Lane. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
--- *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. trans. B. Massumi. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 1987.
--- *What is Philosophy?* trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Deleuze, Gilles and Parnet, Claire. *Dialogues*. trans. Janis Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Fraser, Mariam and Greco, Monica. (ed.) *The Body: A Reader*. USA and Canada, Routledge, 2005.

Garelick, Rhonda. "Fashioning Hybridity." *Orlan + Davidelfin: Suture, Hybridisation, Recycling*. Ed. De la Villa, Rocio and Cruz Sanchez, Pedro Alberto. Murcia Cultural, 2009.

Goodall, Jane. "An order of Pure Decision: Un-Natural Selection in the work of Stelarc and Orlan." *Body Modification*. Ed. Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 2000.

Greenberg, Keith. "Woman on the Cutting Edge of Modern Art." *Generations & Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*. Ed. Griselda Pollock. Routledge, 1996.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
--- *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. New York: U of Minnesota P, 2008.

Heartney, Eleanor. "Orlan: Magnificient 'And'." *Orlan: Carnal Art.* Ed. Schultz-Touge, Christine. Editions Flammarion, 2004.

Hirschhorn, Michelle. "Orlan: Artist in the Post-Human Age of Mechanical Reincarnation: Body as Ready(to be re-) Made." *Generations & Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings.* Ed. Griselda Pollock. Routledge, 1996.

Ince, Kate. *Orlan: Millennial Female.* Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2000.

Jones, Amelia. *Body Art/Performing the Subject.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998.

Kauffman, Linda S. "Cutups in Beauty School." *Bad Girls and Sick Boys: Fantasies in Contemporary Art and Culture*. U of California Press, 1998.

Lorraine, Tamsin. *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*. Cornell University Press, 1999.

Lovelace, Carey. "Orlan: Offensive Acts." *Performing Arts Journal.* 17 (1995): 13-25.

Obrist, Hans Ulrich. "Orlan Interviewed." *Orlan: Carnal Art.* Ed. Schultz-Touge, Christine. Editions Flammarion, 2004.

O'Bryan, C. Jill. *Carnal Art: Orlan's Refacing.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2005.

Orlan. *Carnal Art Manifesto*. 18 February 2008
< http://www.orlan.net >
--- "Conference." *This Is My Body...This Is My Software...* Ed. Duncan

McCorquondale. London: Black Dog, 1996.
--- "Harlequin Coat." *Sk-Interfaces.* Ed. Jens Hauser, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.
--- "Intervention." *The Ends of Performance.* Ed. Peggy Phelan, Jill Lane. New York and London: NYU Press, 1998.
--- "Interview." *The South Bank Show.* Dir. David Wiles. Ed. and pres. Melvyn Bragg. London Weekend Television, 1997.

Negrin, Llewellyn. "Cosmetic Surgery and the Eclipse of Identity." *Body and Society.* 8(4): 21–42, 2002.

Parr, Adrian. (ed.) *The Deleuze Dictionary.* New York: U of Minnesota P, 2005.

Pitts, Victoria. *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Rajchman, John. *The Deleuze Connections.* The MIT Press, 2000.

Rose, Barbara. "Orlan: Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act." *Art in America.* 81:2 pp. 83-125, 1993.

Ruhs, August. "Orlan Metamorphoser." *Body as Membrane.* P. 61-65, 1996.

Schultz-Touge, Christine. *Orlan: Carnal Art.* Editions Flammarion, 2004.

Tejeda, Isabel. "Orlan, Subject Omitted: From the Blank Page to the Harlequin." *Orlan + Davidelfin: Suture, Hybridisation, Recycling.* Ed. De la Villa, Rocio and Cruz Sanchez, Pedro Alberto. Murcia Cultural, 2009.

Viola, Eugenio. "The Narrative." *Orlan: The Narrative.* Ed. Hegyi, Lorand, Bader, Joerg, Viola, Eugenio, Iacub, Marcela, Kuspit, Donald, Phelan, Peggy,

Orlan. Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2007.

Zimmermann, Anja. "'Sorry for Having to Make You Suffer': Body, Spectator, and the Gaze in the Performances of Yves Klein, Gina Pane, and Orlan." *Discourse.* 24.3, 27-46, 2002.