

The new era, which, according to some experts, began in the 1950s, dictates new conditions for society and other living creatures on the planet. The beginning marked as an Anthropocene —caused by the testing of atomic bombs, climate change, plastic and air pollution, global mass extinction of species, and land transformation due to deforestation, the scale of which humankind is just beginning to realise (Carrington, 2016). Another way of viewing this is that the Anthropocene comprises human self-destruction, according to I. Emmelhainz (2015). The notion of humanity broadly encompasses human strive for safety and status quo. Hence, the avoidance of Anthropocenic consequences constitutes a radical change in the conditions of visibility, language and performativity, as per Emmelhainz (2015), the subsequent transformation of the world into images rooted in the ubiquitous distribution of synthetic and digital images, separated from human vision and tangible perception. Thus, D. Haraway titles modern people as chimaeras, invented and fabricated hybrids of the machine and organism, that is, cyborgs (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017, p. 10). Haraway (2017) sees the vagueness of distinction in notions of animals, humans and machines, due to the uncertainty of what can be accepted as nature in the age of Anthropocene, as almost every aspect of nature has been manipulated. Thus, according to D. Haraway (2017), J. Butler (2015) and W. Benjamin (1933), the notion of the human in the anthropocentric future is diminishing and becomes dehumanised. Besides, D. Haraway (2017) stresses the necessity for a responsible relationship between human and machines as the latter converts human embodiment (Paisey, 2012). This essay aims to answer what it does to the human figure, how it is disfigured in terms of *visibility*, *language*, and *performativity* demonstrated in contemporary artwork examples. The first section of this paper will explore the changes in the conditions of visibility under the Anthropocene in human, nonhuman and automated vision, illustrated with an example of Jean-Luc Godard's experimental film *Goodbye to Language* (*Adieu au Langage*, 2014). The second section explores how *language*, *performativity* and *human decision-making* correlate and affect the notion of the human body—demonstrated in the text from the conceptual book *How to Disappear in America* (2008) by Seth Price.

In an age of omnipresent synthetic and digital images, modern social construction has been challenged by socio-technical factors, such as transgression between the boundary of reality and fiction due to the

globalised internet. This 'image gluttony' subsequently opaque the distinction between human-machine. The boundary between physical and non-physical became imprecise, making the conditions of visibility predominantly optical due to total digitalisation. As per D. Haraway theory, cyborg combines reality and fiction - two combined centres, the image and myth of the cyborg construct one's consciousness, that is never going to be comparable to any previous human perceptions (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017, p. 10). Thus, she determines the transgression in the boundary between material reality and the fabrication by conceiving cyborgs as augmented reality (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017, pp10-11). This idea is supported by Emmelhainz (2015), who claims that the coded interactions affect human associations and the knowledge-making process, 'turning images and aesthetic experience into cognition and thus into empty sensations or tautological truths about reality.' As Emmelhainz (2015) puts it:

images now participate in forming worlds, they have become forms of thought constituting a new kind of knowledge—one that is grounded in visual communication and thereby dependent on perception, demanding the development of the optical mind (Emmelhainz, 2015)

Emmelhainz sees that the boundary between physical and non-physical is imprecise. The material perception of the world is no longer epistemological and now replaced by simulacral sign-value. As Donna Haraway affirms, the automated prosthetic sight provokes the 'unregulated gluttony' that assumes anything can be seen or imagined, that explains how the notion of cyborg construct dissimilar consciousness (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017, p. 44).

Furthermore, Haraway (2017) notes the ambiguity of notions between animal-human-machine, observing the uncertainty of what can be accepted as nature in Anthropocene. So, the bionic prosthetics and growing of human organs within animal bodies already has been going on for several years. Besides, global security/surveillance culture could be read as an inquiry of defining more-than-human sensibilities and decentring human decision-making at the forefront of its official practice (Simon 2018, p.402). Thus, it can be concluded that people have ceased to exist as objects of

sensible perception, giving way to biotechnical components, that are specific devices for processing information and communication technology and biotechnology were the critical factors of such change (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017, pp. 43, 44).

Jean-Luc Godard's abstruse film *Goodbye to Language* (2014) reflects the thinking of D. Haraway and I. Emmelhainz that was discussed above. This experimental film, as an example, aims to illustrate the anthropocentric dichotomy of human and posthuman under the dominance of the simulacral optical mind. At the beginning of the film, the quote on 0:14:15 discloses Godard's opinion on the stated above concepts:

the interior experience is now forbidden by society in general.<...> What they call images are becoming
the murder of the present (Goodbye to Language, 2014)



Goodbye to Language (2014), Directed by J. Godard (Amazon, Accessed 25 April 2021)

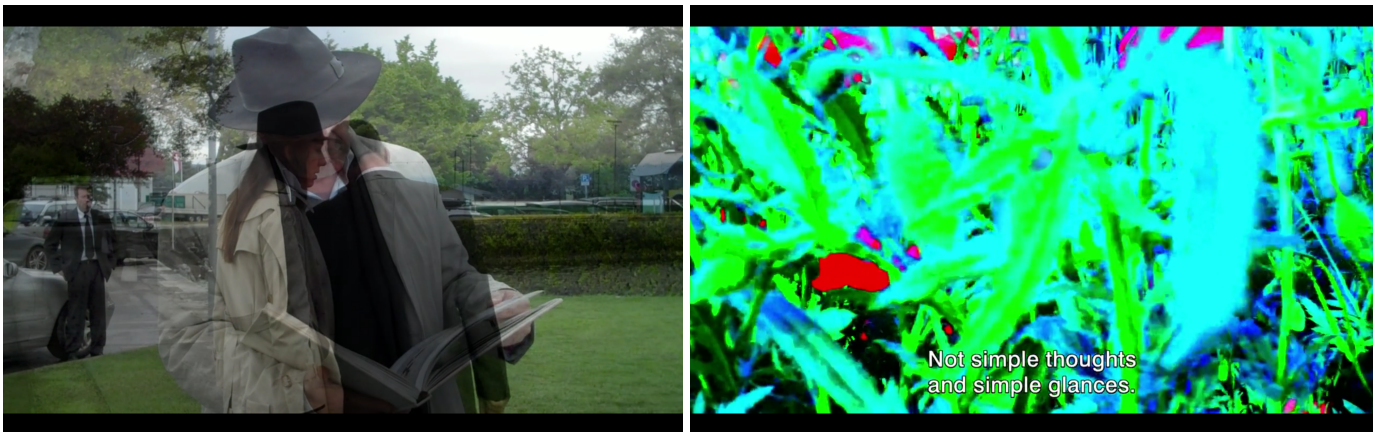
According to Quandt (2014), Godard's synopsis of *Adieu's* narrative, written as a lowercase poem, shows in the first part an ordinary story of a married woman in an abusive relationship who meets a single

man, and in the second part, another story of failing a couple's relationship. Meanwhile, throughout all parts, the film exhibits a dog. Supposedly, the film's central notion is to expose the protagonists' strive to emerge from the language to the real visible and audible world. Plausible, the tragedy of the film lay in the protagonists' incapability to cast off their fragmentary solipsistic consciousness. An example of this notion is Aduie's (2014) scene where the man holds a cubist catalogue. That catalogue is an idol of the fragmented reality, implied by Godard. This is because Cubism pioneered disintegrated reality in art, as it invented the discontinuous and multifaceted space with disrupting interrelations between subject and object without their dissociation, opposing the Cartesian representation of the Renaissance perspective (Emmelhainz, 2015). Pursuant to Emmelhainz (2015), the cubist notion of dissociating gaze developed a new antihumanist subject position (Emmelhainz, 2015). Feasibly, that was Godard's tacit hint to the viewer, helping to silently explain the central enigma of the protagonists in the *Goodbye to Language* (2014).

The film is shot in 3-D, on smartphones, GoPro and DSLR cameras, introducing a mechanical, posthuman eye, hence immersing the viewer in the posthuman gaze (Quandt, 2014). According to W. Kimball (2014), shooting on two side-by-side DSLR cameras allowed Godard to create an illusion of using the lenses similar to eyes by crossing, occasionally overlapping 'the gaze' in the same frame and decentering the 3-D and depth of field in the title frames. However, Godard confuses viewers by superimposing two 3-D images so that each eye sees a different picture simultaneously, that the mind unable instantly to decrypt the image of the scene. Thus, constantly rearranging the perceptions, undermining the unified world's vision, not favouring the illusion of the human eye to machine artificial gaze. Hence, the distorted vivid 3-D image (that can be found below) signifies a 'notion of self that exists only at the moment of the externality of that particular experience', creating a unique dissimilar experience, as the sensorimotor level of perception is forbidden (Emmelhainz, 2015). Thus, the film artistically examines the dichotomy between reality and myth, or perhaps the transgression in between.

In the expressionistic vivid 3-D scenes of nature and a scene with Claude Monet's quote on the screen: 'paint not what we see, for we see nothing, but paint that we do not see' (Kimball, 2014). The example

of the off-centred 3-D scene one can find below. I believe this quote has various meanings within this film. First, in my opinion, it is an unspoken repetition of Godard's central paradigm regarding the world, where the essence experience is lacking, and images substitute reality. Thus, the quote emphasise the opaqueness in the distinctions between reality and produced reality. Plus, as an artist, Godard's strive to explore the borderline of this dichotomy and invoke self-conciseness in the spectators. Second, as per Kimball (2014), this is preferably a practical notion of explaining Godard's play with the lenses in order to shoot the scene of 'that we do not see', as one can perceive the borderline in between subject and reflection when to channels cross (Kimball, 2014).



Goodbye to Language (2014), Directed by J. Godard (Amazon, Accessed 25 April 2021)

Finally, Godard's film restlessly explicates the connection between humans and animals at least in three ways. First, through a dog's character. Roxy, the dog, displayed on the walks in different seasons throughout the entire film. According to Emmelhainz (2015), Roxy becomes a metaphor for the hope of 'an 'other' post-anthropocentric language "between" humans. Second, the scene where the narrator voiced the dog's fundamental questions, such as: what is man, war, society (the same questions as human philosophers forever), registers how alike animals and humans are. However, W. Kimball (2014) understands these dog's inquiries as a sign of the inability of a dog to perceive human, war and society. She believes that this Godard's artistic decision aims to undermine social norms by using the dog's point

of view, threatening the idea that reality is solely understood from a human's worldview (Kimball, 2014). The screenshot of the scene is rendered below. Yet, I cannot entirely agree with Kimball's opinion, as I suppose Godard's notion was to demonstrate how comparable animals and humans are: how they question the same perceptions and likewise can not elucidate them. Besides, there is nothing more human than inquiring about your own and society's entity. For instance, the narrator's voice-over at the first act of the film questions war and fascism, hence inquiring about society and not providing any answers. Nevertheless, the scene where the dog by the use of the voice-over inquires the same philosophical questions at the second act of the film acknowledges the assumption that this juxtaposition is made to evoke the similarity between posthuman and human agency.



Goodbye to Language (2014), Directed by J. Godard (Amazon, Accessed 25 April 2021)

Third, Godard consolidates a genuinely unique approach with such different hypostases as gender and species equality concerning defecation. These senses are illustrated twice in the scene when she stands naked before him as he excretes, and the latter in the second act displays the dog defecating in the field. The picture of the scene can be found below.



Goodbye to Language (2014), Directed by J. Godard (Amazon, Accessed 25 April 2021)

The natural act is displayed in the couple's gender role-playing and another juxtaposition to the animal agency. In the film, the woman says: 'each time I talk about equality, you take a poop. The man, sitting on the toilet, answers: that is because we are equals' (Kimball, 2014). Immediately after a second similar scene in Act Two, the display of a pooping dog appears. Subsequently transmits the assumption that it is another Godard's reflection on the affinity between humankind and animals. The transgressive scene of a naked woman facing expressing no embarrassment defecating man raises the ambiguity of distinction between the un-scruple animal excrement. However, Kimball (2014) provides a different interpretation of the defecation scene: she believes it aims to expose gender inequality and misogyny. Besides, she designates the dog's defecation as unselfconscious, which is an apparent misunderstanding of the hound's behaviour psychology (Kimball, 2014). Defecting process is a profoundly conscious communicational behaviour of a countless number of nonhuman species. Therefore, I hold the impression that Godard aimed to express similarities, not differences, between man, woman and animals.

The further section of this essay aims to reveal the role of performativity and language at the shift of the human notion in the Anthropocene. D. Haraway (2017) propose one significant concept in *A Cyborg Manifesto*, that language is the power to describe the 'trouble' and contribute to a social change. It is contextually relating to the ascendant human rights movement and feminism destabilising the

archaistic norms like patriarchy and racism, where language functions as a form of social action. This concept is supported by J. Butler (2015), as she states that 'performativity is the language of representation' (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, pp.130-132). As per J. Butler (1998), performativity is the ability of language to cause transformation in society. However, for J. Butler, performativity is not solely an extension of discourse, now social agents constitute and reconstitute reality through their performance of language, gesture and all manner of symbolic social sign' (J. Butler, 1998, p. 519). Thereby it is relevant to paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir claim that J. Butler (1998) quotes in *An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*: one is not born, but, instead, becomes a human.

On the other hand, what happens to the language of representation of the marginalised corporality like immigrants, expatriates, LGBTQ persons who remain unseen in society (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, pp.132 -140)? As per J. Butler, neoliberalism has made the human body overly instrumentalised and, as a result, disposable (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, p. 145). For instance, in numerous countries, including the United States, the labour market bases on exploiting those who are precarious or on the margins (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, pp.136-147). Thus, for example, the life of an immigrant carries the unpredictability of the future, erratic hirings and arbitrary firings, intensively utilised and exploited labour and unemployment for an enduring period—these fabricate an unpredictable future and extreme sense of helplessness against the absence of health insurance and a permanent lodging for the marginalised (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, pp. 146-148). With this in mind, J. Butler (2015) indicates that as long as the bodies are considered disposable, found ejected, and remain uncounted, this relationship between disposability and politics will further affect social norms associated with the notions and practices of dehumanisation and necropower. As a result, the arbitrary and violent rhythms of being instrumentalised as disposable labour dehumanised the notion of the human body.

Despite this, the contemporary moment finds the beliefs in anthropocentric mastery and control over security/surveillance (Braidotti, Hlavajova and Simon, 2018, p 402). As per S.Simone (2018), the decentring of the human agency and privilege of technology are at the forefront of official practice: the data-driven, risk-based, speculative frames of algorithmic modelling are indifferent to the specificity of

persons and places, being somewhat concerned with relationships of correlation between data points. Moreover, the security/surveillance assemblage centred on what can be predicted on our proclivities and probabilities, not on our personality or data (Braidotti, Hlavajova and Simon, 2018). According to T. Brain (2018), data collection and modelling practices are being shaped by stereotypes, allocating essential and peripheral. These relate to the J. Butler concept of representing the latter's marginalised corporality and its technological blindness. An example of such systematic blindness of the underprivileged is portrayed In Seth Price's conceptual book *How to Disappear in America* (2008).



Seth Price's book *How to Disappear in America* (Sethpriceimages, Accessed 8 May 2021)

How to Disappear in America (2008) is assembled in parts from appropriated treatises, manuals, mimeographed pamphlets, some from the seventies and current data from internet forums and blogs on how to hide from the federal government, pursuers, law and abusive relationships (Price and Spaulings, 2008, p.1). This didactic textbook is devoted to unfolding probabilities of what a person on the run can face while 'going to the ground', whether by changing the colour of one's hair and habits or drastically alternating one's identity (Price, 2008, p.38, 42). Nevertheless, unfortunately, this diminishing myth of not leaving traces is increasingly at odds with the reality of the satellite and bank

tracking under omnipresent surveillance: the only way of disappearing may well be not so much to vanish, as to adopt someone else's identity, 'to leave traces that are not your own' (Newman, 2008, p. 21).

The quote from *How to Disappear in America* (2008) confirms J. Butler's (2015) point that the marginalised individuals like immigrants, expatriates, LGBTQ persons and women are remained invisible by the system, either because of their insignificance or not-inclusive in the mindset of the engineers, who made them outsiders of their data points:

Illegal immigrants face the exact same problems that those who wish to become anonymous in America face. The housewife who's been beaten into the hospital too many times faces the same problems which illegal 'wet backs' face (Price, 2008, p. 17)

In my opinion, this book is demonstrative evidence of the social invisibility and dehumanisation of marginalised people. *How to Disappear in America* (2008) unpretentiously reveals that one must obtain the unseen identities of immigrants, gay people, and abused women to become invisible to society. To be precise, on pages 17, 46, 88, 91 and more, Price's (2008) writing draws similarities in the lifestyle of absconding people and immigrants throughout the book. Moreover, according to this handbook, gay bars are a better place to hide than in hills, as if one run to the hills, satellites will track and identify the person (Price, 2008, pp. 33, 34, 43).

It is interesting, one way to disappear in America that the book seems to talk about has to do with the world of work and gainful employment, contracts and paperwork (Price and Spaulings, 2008, p.5). Paradoxically, the official employment allows providing the social performativity that J. Butler (1998) introduced in her work *Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, but not entirely thru performance of language, gesture and all manner of the symbolic social sign (as solely she thought) in the face of the state. Thus, 'no technical renovation of language, but its mobilisation in the service of the struggle or work' has a real potential of improving the world (Benjamin and Livingstone, 1933).

W. Benjamin (1933), in his writing *Experience and Poverty*, designated the problem of WWI veterans returning with a more inferior communicable function due to being dramatised. According to Benjamin (1933), the significant technological breakthrough in the 20th century additionally invented a new kind of poverty – the poverty of experience, that 'is just a part of that larger poverty that has once again acquired a face.' Back in 1933, W. Benjamin, undoubtedly similar to I. Emmelhainz, questions the value of modern culture that is divorced from experience:

Where it all leads when that experience is simulated or obtained by underhanded means is something that has become clear to us <...>. Indeed (let's admit it), our poverty of experience is not merely poverty on the personal level, but poverty of human experience in general (Benjamin and Livingstone, 1933)

Conceivably, Benjamin means as 'general human poverty' that people are far too impressed by anthropocentric viewpoint; by their alleged cleverness and self-consciousness. Technological progress indeed differed and will transform the notion of the human body, leading to its instrumentation. Back in 1933, technologies transformed human beings, as Benjamin indicates, into totally different creatures that, moreover, communicate with a new language:

this language is its arbitrary, constructed nature, in contrast to organic language. This is the distinctive feature of the language of 'people'; for humanlikeness – a principle of humanism – is something they reject (Benjamin and Livingstone, 1933)

W. Benjamin refers to the fascist cult of *Übermensch* (Superhuman), introduced by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Hitler and the Nazi regime rhetoric commonly used. This quote expresses Benjamin's desire to return to the myth of humanistic 'humanlikeness'. However, as long as any bodies remain disposable and discarded, this will remain a myth (Butler and Athanasiou, 2015, pp. 146-148). Thus, the resolution is to marshalling the language to describe the political strife and instrumentalisation of labour for the change (Benjamin and Livingstone, 1933).

To conclude, the Anthropocene did not create a new image of the world but changed human's ways of seeing themselves and the entity of reality they exist in (Emmelhainz, 2015). The global human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems and climate affected almost every aspect of the planet, opaque the differentiation in notions of animals, humans and machines, due to the uncertainty of what can be accepted as nature (Хараяэй and Гараджа, 2017) Plus, technological progress transformed the notion of the human body in many ways. Subsequently, it converted the world into images, endangered real experiences, as the modern relationship between human and machines converts human embodiment into cyborgs (Paisey, 2012). Omnipresent synthetic and digital images now participate in forming worlds, constituting a new kind of knowledge and experience. These observations have been discussed in the first section of this essay and illustrated by the analysis of the film *Goodbye to Language* (2014), directed by J. Godard.

The second section of this essay

The arbitrary and violent rhythms of being instrumentalised as disposable labour dehumanised the notion of the human body -mechanisation - dehumanisation and necropower

- In an age of omnipresent synthetic and digital images, modern social construction has been challenged by socio-technical factors, such as transgression between the boundary of reality and fiction due to the globalised internet. This 'image gluttony' subsequently opaque the distinction between human-machine. The boundary between physical and non-physical became imprecise, making the conditions of visibility predominantly optical due to total digitalisation.

Prediction/ solution

Caught humanity in the crossfire between monstrous dehumanization in the scenario Benjamin provided or between

Society would be healthier if ...

Let us hope that from time to time the individual will give a little humanity to the masses, who one day will repay him with compound interest (Benjamin and Livingstone, 1933)

Bibliography

Barad, K., 2003. Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. pp.1,10,11.

Benjamin, W. and Livingstone, R., 1933. Experience and Poverty. [online] Atlasofplaces.com. Available at: <<https://www.atlasofplaces.com/essays/experience-and-poverty/>> [Accessed 8 May 2021].

Braidotti, R., Hlavajova, M. and Simon, S., 2018. *Posthuman glossary (SS = security/surveillance)*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.402-404.

Butler, J., n.d. Performative acts and gender constitution. The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 519-531.

Brain, T., 2018. The environment is not a system. *Aprja*, [online] 7(1), pp.153-165. Available at: <<https://aprja.net//article/view/116062/164244>> [Accessed 8 February 2021].

Butler, J. and Athanasiou, A., 2015. Dispossession. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 130-140.

Carrington, D., 2016. The Anthropocene epoch: scientists declare dawn of human-influenced age. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/29/declare-anthropocene-epoch-experts-urge-geological-congress-human-impact-earth>> [Accessed 10 April 2021].

Cohen, R. and Balen, T., 2008. LIFE SUPPORT, Respiratory Dog. [image] Available at:
<<https://www.cohenvanbalen.com/work/life-support#>> [Accessed 15 April 2021].

Emmelhainz, I., 2015. Conditions of Visuality Under the Anthropocene and Images of the Anthropocene to Come. [online] E-flux.com. Available at:
<<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/63/60882/conditions-of-visibility-under-the-anthropocene-and-images-of-the-anthropocene-to-come/>> [Accessed 27 April 2021].

Godard, J., 2014. Goodbye to Language. [video] Available at:
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.3aa9f66b-42a5-d040-b0c8-6c8df850a71f?autoplay=1&ref_atv_cf_strg_wb> [Accessed 25 April 2021].

Griffin, T., 2009. *THE PERSONAL EFFECTS OF SETH PRICE*. [online] Artforum.com. Available at:
<<https://www.artforum.com/print/200906/the-personal-effects-of-seth-price-22966>> [Accessed 8 May 2021].

Kimball, W., 2014. Godard's "Goodbye to Language": The Importance of a Dog. [online] Art F City. Available at:
<<http://artfcity.com/2014/09/18/godards-goodbye-to-language-the-importance-of-a-dog/>> [Accessed 28 April 2021].

Newman, M., 2008. *Seth's Price Operations*. [ebook] Zürich: Kunsthalle Zürich, p.21. Available at:
<<http://www.distributedhistory.com/NewmanOnPrice.pdf>> [Accessed 8 May 2021].

Paisey, F., 2012. Donna Haraway: An Overview of The Cyborg Manifesto. [online] Slideshare.net. Available at:
<<https://www.slideshare.net/fpaisey/donna-haraway-an-overview-of-the-cyborg-manifesto>> [Accessed 28 April 2021].

Price, S., 2008. *How to disappear in America*. New York: The Leopard Press, pp.17, 31-33, 40-46, 88-94.

Price, S., 2021. *Seth Price's book How to Disappear in America*. [image] Available at:
<<https://sethpriceimages.com/post/42851720244/how-to-disappear-in-america-2008-seth-price>> [Accessed 8 May 2021].

Price, S. and Spaulings, R., 2008. SETH PRICE by REENA SPAULINGS. Available at:
<<http://www.distributedhistory.com/Nterview.pdf>> [Accessed 8 May 2021].

Quandt, J., 2014. James Quandt on Jean-Luc Godard's Goodbye to Language. [online] Artforum.com. Available at:
<<https://www.artforum.com/print/201407/jean-luc-godard-s-goodbye-to-language-47863>> [Accessed 26 April 2021].

Young, S., 2016. Judith Butler: Performativity. [online] Critical Legal Thinking. Available at:
<<https://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/11/14/judith-butlers-performativity/>> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Харауэй, Д. and Гараджа, А., 2017. Манифест Киборгов. Garage.