

Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

01/10

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

Prelude

“When there is nothing to govern, nothing to secure, there is blackness.”¹

Scene 1

Barkskins, a novel by Annie Proulx, is a literary account of the violence of clearing that was endemic to settler colonialism in Canada and the northern US at the time of early colonization by the French, and later the English. Starting with the early arrival in the 1600s and continuing to the multigenerational raping of the land by the steady influx of colonizers, the book relentlessly marks the passage from plenitude to desecration, the forests denuded at the cost of upheaval and the death of the people who had never sought to clear them. This story is ultimately not about the trees, of course, but about the violence of cultural clearing and the genocide it leaves behind. And yet it is also about the trees, about those enormous pines, the forests unimaginable, the pristine “before” when lands were rich and people lived out of the clear.

As these accounts do, the story begins with a French man, Trépigny, and though First Nations characters make their way into the story and even become main characters, the reader never forgets that it is the colonizer who enters first, and who makes the first cut.

The scene is as we expect it: black flies, mud, rain, “dark vast forest, inimical wilderness.”² “How big is the forest?” one of the early colonizers asks. “It is the forest of the world. It is infinite. It twists around as a snake swallows its own tail and has no end and no beginning. No one has seen its farthest dimension.”³ The first tree – made into a great old single board pine table – serves as a motif for all that has been violently stolen, for all that has been falsely claimed into ownership, for all that has been condoned in the cementing of the notion that nature is owed and owned. The table, which will eventually be bequeathed to the half-breed daughter by the white colonizer father, will be fought over, claimed by his sons. They will argue that the Indian cannot see its value, that she has no use for it, and that it is rightfully theirs. She will appease them, agreeing that she does not see its value. “She rapped her knuckles on the pine. She said she did not know why Outger was so passionate about it. He asked after it in every letter and would undoubtedly be angry when she told him it was gone.”⁴

She will not lay claim to it, will refuse to see the value it has in the white man’s eyes, but she will also refuse to give it back. Because the table, she understands, represents the experiment that she has become. “I can see now ... that all his pedagogy was an experiment. The books and instruction had been his attempt to make her

into something like a learned whiteman, like himself.”⁵ Unclaimed, the table will have done its work, teaching her with all the demoralizing splendor that comes with colonization that she can neither inhabit the world of the white man nor, ultimately, become Indian enough, no matter how much she tries. “‘But,’ she said sadly, ‘I could not become an Indian.’ ‘Of course not,’ said Dr. Mukhtar. ‘There is a whole world of signs, symbols and spirits which all must be absorbed from birth. You could not hope to grasp the meanings except by living the entire life.’”⁶ The table stays as the scar of a life stolen. Eventually, it will fall into oblivion, like the rest of the “largest white pines that ever grew in the world,” but the memory of its infinitude, of all the potential violated, will continue to haunt the clearing.⁷

Scene 2

We already know how the story ends. On May 29, 2021, the headline reads: “Canada mourns as remains of 215 children found at indigenous school.”⁸ It wasn’t an indigenous school, of course. It was a residential school, a Canadian school, in the clearing. The picture says it all: sparse trees growing in the background, empty yard, an architecture completely at odds with the environment, cleared of life, of all that immanently interconnects. The violence of logistics is inscribed in the ghost trees of its whitened surround.

How we organize bodies, we who sidle whiteness, how we excise (from clear sight) the ravages of an earth desecrated, of a people brutally murdered – these are the workings of logistics. Logistics mediate existence by keeping it at arm’s length, soothing us into believing that we are not responsible. The deaths are newsworthy, and we’re sorry, but we must move on. It’s not really about us and in any case, there’s nothing we can do about it. Let’s get a mediator and sort this out!

At arms length, we see these workings – the cleared forest, the dying planet, the dead children – as somehow disconnected. We do not acknowledge the felling of the trees as the wanton destruction of all that transversally connects. And yet logistics, in its power of mediation, is all about the forests. It’s all about the cotton planted in their wake.

The ghostly outline of Proulx’s pine table haunts the residential school, its absence equal to the absence of education. Because what the residential school really does is unteach. Taking the place of pedagogy, what is practiced here is theft. Theft of thought, of imagination. This theft is a rape. A physical rape, a sexual aggression, but also a conceptual rape, a clearing – “to snatch, to grab, to carry off by force” – of all that

lives in the abyss of what has been left behind.⁹ Rape, relation severed, cuts the fragile interwoven threads of existence, wresting life from life-living, from the more-than that gives it its spirited and spiritual contour. If body is land, if bodying is only ever worlding, what residential school does, in this most recent form of clearing, is sever this imbrication, leaving the body lifeless.

All that remains is the clearing. And a mess. But this can be handled. This is how mediation does its work, in the name of and as logistics. From here on in, things will be managed. Managers will be appointed to organize, to administer, the now-reduced environment. This science of loss – “which is to say the science of whiteness, or logistics” – is predicated on the end of sharing, on the destruction of the excessive share, the annihilation of that which exceeds the one-two form whose dramaturgy relies of the intervention of the mediator.¹⁰ The mediator will take the form of the “yellow eyebrows” in Proulx’s account, but it also need not take a simple human form. Repetition of the same is the form it takes in a dramaturgy of extinction.

Scene 3

Clearing produces property. Property produces dispossession. “All property is loss because all property is the loss of sharing.”¹¹ The accursed share of all that exceeds interpersonal, mediation, whiteness, logistics, all that cannot be accounted for, sickens the field. And sometimes rejuvenates it. The force of the transindividual, of all that exceeds and precedes the individual, does rewild. But its vitality is weakened, and as perception is honed to single out the individual over the field, the human increasingly becomes the focal point, becoming synonymous with life. This is how the logistics of genocide – the genocide of relation – does its work.

The genocide of relation can never be traced back, quite. Relation cannot be propertied. What is lost cannot be parsed. The yellow eyebrows have a role to play, of course, and we could call on the archbishop for that missing apology, but the truth is, it was never just one. He was never just the one. He is a logistical pattern, a commitment to the dramaturgy of (white) man as self-centered orchestrator of existence cleared.

Scene 4

Logistics: the slave ship, but also the body-as-individual. “The first odious vessel produced by and for logistics is not the slave ship, but the body – flesh conceptualized – which bears the individual-in-subjection.”¹²

In the clearing, man is revealed as the loss

of relation. Humanism is born here, in the empty space of the stolen land, in the vast expanse of the 1+1, the infinite regress of nothing-in-between.

How to fill the emptiness? How to create an account for all that is lost and yet claimed?

Mediation offers to fill the shape of the between. Mediation as the figure of what comes between, of what fills that “empty” space. The adjuster, the divorce lawyer, the priest, the government agent.

A quick intervention to make sense of all that has become unclear, to fill in the lines, to provide context.

And perhaps this does make things clearer, perhaps we understand each other a bit better now that we’ve mediated all we couldn’t make sense of in the vast emptiness of our difference. But the problem is: mediation never goes away. It sits there, inert but active, facilitating the ongoing impoverishment relation by adhering to all that takes the shape of the 1+1 of body-as-individual, of interpersonality. Because in advance of the gesture of inserting the mediating influence, he is already there. Long before the divorce, he hovers, betweener, judging, parsing, condoning, condemning. His take doesn’t really matter. What matters is that he remains in the

offing, holding things apart.

Mediation is the father of the control society. It is the way surveillance takes on a personality from the outside in. Whether formally or informally, mediation sets the tone for an interpersonality that, by definition, can only be lived at a distance. Playing at impartiality, mediation haunts the surround, reducing it to what is already known, what is already valued, what is already within the scope of the expressible. 2+1, always less than 3, mediation is passive aggressor, poised for judgment, always in the know (while it listens carefully). Because its role is to keep existence in its track, on its logistical path. It doesn’t really matter who is right. It matters that it needs mediation.

Mediation knows best, trampling on any detail of middling, sewing interactivity into a twoness without excess. Hardening the between of interpersonality into the amplification of the self-same, mediation lodges at the interstice, cutting it into a hyphen, setting up its colony on the bridge. Settler, it speaks from a place it has never had to truly encounter because its role is only to order things apart.

Harney and Moten might speak of mediation with the same disdain as they do of logistics, which they call the “science of whiteness.”¹³

03/10



New classroom building of Kamloops Indian Residential School, Kamloops, British Columbia, c. 1950. License: CC BY 2.0.

Mediation is the logistic category par excellence of whiteness. It has no content, is not in itself an agent of transformation, does nothing but cannibalize the life it parses. Its intervention happens in the beat of enter and retreat, leaving the uneasy twoness of existence to sort itself out. In the name of property and propriety, mediation solves all uncertainties of zoning. That it never actually leaves is its dirty secret.

But the logistics of mediation can only fail. The interface is shaky – we know this both from the endemic code 404, page not found, and from the impossibility of truly domesticating our surrounds. Ultimately, the squirrels, the black flies, the birds, the worms, the fungi, the weeds, the viruses, the hackers cannot be kept in their place. The disarray is handled, of course, with more mediation, with more logistics.

The interface claims a distance, a secure between-two that repeats the refrain of nature colonized, of culture denatured. It promises a security of inhabitation, a zone that can be controlled, a slip through which we can safely enter, we who claim the place. Here, in the logistics of passage that beats at the cadence of the one-two, me-you, the outcome is always the same. Police to subjugate. Code to organize. Clear to colonize.

Logistics aims to straighten us out, untangle us, and open us to its usufruct, its improving use; such access to us, in its turn, improves the flow line, the straight line. And what logistics takes to be the shortest distance between us requires emplotting us as bodies in space where interiority can be imposed even as the capacity for interiority can be denied, in the constant measure and regulation of flesh and earth.¹⁴

Scene 5

Deleuze and Guattari speak of man as the white wall of the black hole of existence.¹⁵ Think landscape painting, especially the kind that excises that very life that breathed it into existence. If you're not familiar, search for "Canadian art." And if you don't know the history of the mansplaining of the Canadian landscape, search for the Group of Seven, the early twentieth-century Canadian landscape painters, and notice not only the ubiquity of the vast open, uninhabited space, notice the clearing. Very little has changed over the last hundred years. We still see Canada through the clear, in the emptiness of nature cultured.

The denuded land, the empty north, is how we art ourselves still today, we who property the land. The Group of Seven, those painters of the

land pristine, of the great white north, the painters of the land of the (single) pine and of the distant ridges, they are still with us, still managing the imagination, orchestrating the field, playing the dramaturgy of extinction. Logistics are also aesthetic (if not artful).

The white man is a specter. That is to say, the white man is without content, without shape. He is the shift in form that allows all takings-place to be propertied inhabitations, which is to say, sites already claimed. This is whiteness: the pretense that the lines that demarcate the boundary between me and you protect you, protect me, from the wilderness of all that cannot be contained (and must be kept at bay). The truth is, the wilderness was cleared, but never quite colonized. And that is why whiteness is alive and well. To police a job half-done.

Scene 6

Mediation makes many promises. It promises clarity: think, drop-down menu. It promises fairness: think, divorce court. It promises health: think, therapy. The gesture is cast as innocuous. A simple third, a neutral agent. A little bit of reason. A moment of distance. An interlude so that things can be tied up again and smooth functioning can resume. A representation of the useful.¹⁶

But what is it to insert distance into a field of relation if not violence of the highest degree? Whose distance? At what cost? To what ends?

Guattari fights against this at every turn, refusing mediation either in politics or in psychiatry. Schizoanalysis is the proposition, a call for a transversal operation that breaks the pretense of neutrality in the encounter. A therapeutics of transversality. No more triangle. No more transference. Schizoanalysis is the event of the encounter itself, the practice of encountering. To be in the relation is to have been changed by it. What this looked like: a years-long institutional arrangement housed at a clinic called La Borde in the north of France whereby to be in the therapeutic encounter was to live with the effects of encounters in the everyday and to learn from them how to continue to live. Nothing very complicated, really. But infinitely complex in its transversality. Because to live in the encounter, to allow ourselves to be changed by it, is to be continuously undone, and to be sensitive to all that comes alive in that undoing.

Who we are is a question that can only really be asked (and answered) by the mediator. The mediator, after all, looks in from outside to tell us how our actions are affecting the world. Without the mediator there is no steady external gaze, no calm interface for the mirroring. That's why "who we are" is always a white question, a question of

whiteness, of colonization.

Blackness, write Harney and Moten, is not a thing, or a state (of being). It is the way the doing expresses. It is not a subject, not a person, not a property. It is a field. It is the excess on itself of a body claimed, blackened by hate. Blackness is the celebration of refusing to claim, to be claimed. “Meanwhile, Michael Brown is like another fall and rise through man – come and gone, as irruption and rupture, to remind us not that black lives matter but that black life matters; that the absolute and undeniable blackness of life matters; that this is not a judgment of value but a description of a field of activity that obliterates the worldly distinction between the organic and the inorganic.”¹⁷ Blackness is not the simple descriptor of what has been enfolded. Blackness cannot be mediated into a form imposed (exposed). Blackness is the force of living that exceeds colonization, its accursed share. And in that sense, the wildness of the surround, it too is black. As is the earth.

This is what Guattari means when he entreats us to move from schizoanalysis as a therapeutic-political dispositif, an agencement more than an apparatus, a moving-forth of encounterings afield, toward the transversality

of what he calls the “three ecologies.”¹⁸ These three ecologies, the mental/conceptual, the environmental, and the social, are the overlap, as I see it, of a commitment to a blackening of the earth, out of the clear.

(Necessarily European) man, in and as the exception, imposes speciation upon himself, in an operation that extracts and excepts himself from the earth in order to confirm his supposed dominion over it. And just as the earth must be forcefully speciated to be possessed, man must forcefully speciate himself in order to enact this kind of possession. This is to say that racialization is present in the very idea of dominion over the earth; in the very idea and enactment of the exception; in the very nuts and bolts of possession-by-improvement. The world is posed as the way to live on the earth as the individual is posed as the way to live in the world. To live in the world as an individual is therefore to be logistic, and to be logistic is to settle into a rhythm that kills, to beat out that rhythm over the undercommon track that keeps (giving away) its own measure.¹⁹

05/10



Tom Thomson, *The Jack Pine*, 1916–17. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Scene 7

Guattari wrote *The Three Ecologies* in what have come to be known as his winter years. The winter years came after a sustained attempt at working with the Green Party in the aftermath of the terrible letdown of post-1968 politics in France. This attempt to connect to state politics left Guattari with a sour taste. He knew better, of course, than to trust state politics to be a site of transformation. Schizoanalysis had been the wager that there were other ways – that to work “in common,” “toward the common” is, ultimately, always to commit to the logic of mediation. In *The Three Ecologies*, he makes a plea to invent new ways of being committed to and involved in the urgent call to transversalize experience, ways that move beyond how the state lays claim to existence:

In the domain of social ecology there will be times of struggle in which everyone will feel impelled to decide on common objectives and to act “like little soldiers,” by which I mean like good activists. But there will simultaneously be periods of resingularisation in which individual and collective subjectivities will take their marbles and go home without a thought for collective goals, and in which creative expression as such will take precedence. This new ecosophical logic – and I want to emphasize this point – resembles the manner in which an artist may be led to alter his work after the intrusion of some accidental detail, an event-incident that suddenly makes his initial project bifurcate, making it drift [dérivée] far from its previous path, however certain it had once appeared to be.²⁰

There is an echo in this ecosophic call to Moten and Harney:

Rather than dissipate our preoccupation with how we live and breathe, we need to defend our ways in our persistent practice of them. It’s not about taking the streets; it’s about how, and about what, we take to the streets. What would it be and what would it mean for us jurisgeneratively to take to the streets, to live in the streets, to gather together another city right here, right now?²¹

Ecosophic logic is a refusal of the clearing, of the ways in which we seek to inhabit the space already colonized. It recognizes the lure, and understands the commitment to change that the gesture of taking the streets embodies. But

ecosophic logic asks a different question: What if instead we practiced living by creating new conditions that didn’t center us, that didn’t inadvertently redeem that central and self-centering figure of man and its mediating logistics? What if we painted into the *dérivée* of artfulness’s angle on experience? What if we moved at the pace of that accidental detail tangled with the weeds we have been wasting so much time clearing?

Ecosophic logic is an urgent call to refuse the ongoing clearing that denies, decies, and violates the force of blackness in the ongoing genocide of all that resists the count. To refuse does not mean to face and challenge. Frontality, the neurotypical activity par excellence, only cements into place what is already there, what is already claiming the ground of existence. To refuse means to move into the accursed share of life-living twisting in the troubled interstice, to move with that anarchic share of existence that keeps giving life.

For life-living to thrive, life has to be activated at those interstices that exceed man. Life’s expression as tangle has to be attuned to from the edges in. Conditions have to be crafted to honor what is not about us. This is what the First Nations in *Barkskins* of course already knew. And for this they were cleared. To see, to feel, what was always already there, to pulse with a force of life-living that cannot be claimed – owed or owned – this was always the crime.

Scene 8

The many years Guattari spent practicing schizoanalysis, which is to say, living at La Borde and encountering, daily, the shape of an existence unmediated, an existence committed, always, to a refusal of normopathy – these are what he takes into the project of the three ecologies. And it is specifically the orientation of La Borde toward neurodiversity, I believe, that makes it necessary to underscore what he calls the mental, or conceptual, ecology as the inflecting force that must, and will, change the contours of the environmental and the social. La Borde taught him this: to skirt the question of the subject leaves the black hole wide open, filled to the brim with neurotypicality, whiteness.

In the sickness that has befallen the earth – the ongoing genocide of all that eludes the count – subjectivity, too, has fallen ill. Replaced by the face of man, given the guise of whiteness in all its logistical powers of mediation, subjectivity has been swallowed, engulfed by the subject. “The main feature of the colonial-capitalistic unconscious is the reduction of subjectivity to its subject’s experience.”²² But subjectivity, as Guattari understands it, is nothing other than its ongoing production. It is not the subject. It is the

06/10

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

transversal, the emergent unmediated middle, the collectivity that must never be reduced to the one. This is why, for a renewed project of the earth, or as Moten and Harney would have it, for the blackening of the earth – “we are the moving, blackened, blackening earth”²³ – “it will be a question of literally reconstructing the modalities of ‘group-being’ [*l’être-en-groupe*], not only through ‘communicational’ interventions but through existential mutations driven by the motor of subjectivity.”²⁴

To construct modalities for group-being is a call for an aesthetics of sociality which exceeds the 1+1 of interpersonal. Group-being, or what Guattari refers to as the “group subject,” is not countable. The group subject is never the sum of its parts. As solitary as it is multiplicitous, the group subject makes felt how subjectivity is produced in the excess on itself of coming into relation. The group subject is how the more-than of the relational field finds expression. It is the emergent collectivity of an expression of life-living shared (in its accursed excess), expression irreducible to the one, always beyond consensus. Without mediation, the group subject is activated in the renunciation of summing up. To produce the modalities for this excess of existence requires a mutation on existence itself, a mutation that in every sense rethinks subjectivity as a position.

The group subject reminds us that what we produce is never solely ours. We are not simply our-selves. We are fieldings of complex imbrication. Any other account of experience is subjected to mediation, organized by logistics. Anarchival to the core, the production of subjectivity is not an account of a life contained. It is not condensable to something like identity. It is not reducible to the form of the human. It is always more-than, always in movement, a motor or conduit of a worlding.

The production of subjectivity bodies in the same gesture that it refuses to be a body, an “individual-in-subjection.”²⁵ That is to say: in the production of subjectivity the bodying is always a being of relation. Always in movement, it does its living in the unlimited exposure that exceeds any body-world separation. Subjectivity is not inside. It is not in me. It is out of me.

Rather than speak of the “subject,” we should perhaps speak of components of subjectification, each working more or less on its own. This would lead us, necessarily, to re-examine the relation between concepts of the individual and subjectivity, and, above all, to make a clear distinction between the two. Vectors of subjectification do not necessarily pass through the individual, which in reality

appears to be something like a “terminal” for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines, etc. Therefore, interiority establishes itself at the crossroads of multiple components, each relatively autonomous in relation to the other, and, if need be, in open conflict.²⁶

“That abolition starts with the self.”²⁷

In the drift, subjectivity’s *dérive* is irreducible to the human. Active in the interval of worlds making themselves, subjectivity is never reducible to a subject. The production of subjectivity is the activity of the interstice: vector, not form. Schizoanalysis works at this uneasy juncture. The task of schizoanalysis is not to get between body and world, between-two. Its task is to make way for all that already populates the between, and to agitate, from within the field of relation, orientations already in germ. Fostering the germination, tending the field, schizoanalysis vectors the inflection.

The vectoring requires a subtraction from the open field of all that is still in potentia. Schizoanalysis culls from potential a shape, a way. This excision from process is a subtraction from infinitude to the finite. From the side of infinitude, in the field of immanence, Whitehead calls this activity that sparks a standing out of experience “importance.” From the side of finitude, in the field of activity, Whitehead calls it “expression”:

Expression is founded on the finite occasion. It is the activity of finitude impressing itself on its environment. Thus it has its origin in the finite; and it represents the immanence of the finite in the multitude of its fellows beyond itself. The two together, namely importance and expression, are witnesses both to the monistic aspect of the universe and to its pluralistic character. Importance passes from the world as one to the world as many; whereas, expression is the gift from the world as many to the world as one.²⁸

Importance and expression function as intensifiers of experience, bringing into activity the singularity of a life that nonetheless continues to carry its anarchic share. In this account, the human is not singled out. There is no externalizing voice, no mediator. Arrows of experience are their own force, importance not a question of what matters to me, but of what actually (but always also in potentia) *makes a difference*.

Importance makes way for precision in experience. That is to say, importance is what

07/10

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

fosters a certain specific angle of existence, allowing certain qualities of experience to take precedence over others. We have come to believe that mediation is necessary to parse experience. But as Whitehead emphasizes, the world is always in its own pursuit of amplification. Incessant clearing, colonialism without end, in the afterlife of slavery, results in systems out of kilter. Ecological destruction has finally begun to register, centuries too late. The question of how to bring things into a metastability that is conducive to life-living must involve a reckoning with the deadening force of mediation. We don't need another apology. We need to get out of the way. The blackening of the earth requires the production of something entirely other than me, or you.

Scene 9

The infraface²⁹ of the three ecologies – “the world as one to the world as many ... the world as many to the world as one” – is *immediating*.³⁰ Immediation is not the opposite of mediation. Rather, it is the force of a thirdness irreducible to a between-two. Immediation is the more-than, the $n+1$ that is by necessity $n-1$, one as many, many as one, the qualitative force of an uncountability that diagonalizes to give rise to what else moves in the relation.

The production of subjectivity is immediating to the degree that it is not produced by something outside itself. Immediating, always at once body and world, its own perspective. That is to say, its angle on existence is not ours, cannot be reduced to us. The production of subjectivity is a making-conceptual of existence. It is an attuning to the deadly violence of the body-world split produced in the wake of the clearing.³¹

There are not three ecologies. There is one ecology multiply intertwined. To get to the potential of what the three ecologies in their transversality offer, the production of subjectivity must be attended to. We have failed each other at the juncture of the production of subjectivity in particular, and nothing will be possible without that shift. In the words of *The Invisible Committee*,

the exhaustion of natural resources is probably much less advanced than the exhaustion of subjective resources, of vital resources, that is afflicting our contemporaries. If so much satisfaction is derived from surveying the devastation of the environment it's largely because this veils the frightening ruin of subjectivities. Every oil spill, every sterile plain, every species extinction is an image of our souls in rags, a reflection of our lack of world, of

our intimate impotence to inhabit it.³²

To become in excess of a person, to activate the conditions for a life-living that worlds in the bodying, is a social and environmental act. The emergent sociality of becoming-environmental never happens through the clearing. It happens in the midst, black flies and all. The production of subjectivity in the transversality of the three ecologies is the way the more-than of nature naturing crafts a sociality ecosophically. A sociality, as Harney and Moten might say, *all incomplete*.

Guattari calls the ecology he associates with the production of subjectivity “mental.” I prefer conceptual, to produce a stronger sense of how the world itself is alive with the movement of thought. A turn to Whitehead brings the two together. For Whitehead, the conceptual share is that excess of experience that tunes the occasion to its potential. All activity in the world has a conceptual share, but it is true to say that some aspects of existence make use of it more emphatically. Whitehead calls this “mentality.” Mentality, as in Guattari, is not reducible to the mind. Mentality is the force of existence. It is the world's capacity to exceed itself. All incomplete, the world continuously renews itself.

Scene 10

We don't need to look to some far off lands: it's already here. Isn't that what Tommy Orange means when he says, “Being Indian has never been about returning to the land. The land is everywhere or nowhere”?³³ The work has already begun.

The accursed share of life-living is too unwieldy, too uncountable, to be mediated. It cannot be governed. This is its potency, but also its fallacy. The work is not where we've been taught it is. And the tools we need are not the ones we own.

*a nascent subjectivity
a constantly mutating socius
an environment in the process of being
reinvented³⁴*

The three ecologies are a proposition. They are not a place. To follow the artist-architects Arakawa and Madeline Gins, we might call them an architectural procedure.³⁵ An architectural procedure is not an architecture. It is a fielding of potential that brings into constellation enabling constraints for the construction of a world. Procedurality is key. An architectural procedure must produce itself propositionally. This means that what emerges will never be a thing, a site. It will undercommon itself into existence, perhaps – as Arakawa and Gins once said – “only making an appearance indirectly.”³⁶ Because to see-feel it is to have created the conditions for feeling,

08/10

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

conditions that were never reducible to a subject as given in advance. The event of the three ecologies is here, in the productive looping of a field of experience that is at once constitutive of its expression and constituted by it. Because when importance and expression meet, it is never at our bidding.

x

09/10

Erin Manning studies in the interstices of philosophy, aesthetics, and politics. 3e is the direction her current research takes – an exploration of the transversality of the three ecologies, the social, the environmental, and the conceptual. An iteration of 3e is a land-based project north of Montreal. Her most recent book is *For a Pragmatics of the Useless* (Duke University Press, 2020).

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear

- 1 Stefano Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete* (Minor Compositions, 2021), 84.
- 2 Annie Proulx, *Barkskins* (Scribner, 2016), 3.
- 3 Proulx, *Barkskins*, 4.
- 4 Proulx, *Barkskins*, 254.
- 5 Proulx, *Barkskins*, 292.
- 6 Proulx, *Barkskins*, 292.
- 7 Proulx, *Barkskins*, 322.
- 8 BBC, May 29, 2021 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57291530>.
- 9 *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- 10 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.
- 11 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.
- 12 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.
- 13 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.
- 14 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 18.
- 15 Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 167.
- 16 See Erin Manning, *For a Pragmatics of the Useless* for a more sustained engagement with the concept of the representation of the useful (Duke University Press, 2020).
- 17 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 49.
- 18 Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (Athlone Press, 2000).
- 19 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 29.
- 20 Guattari, *Three Ecologies*, 51. Translation modified.
- 21 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 48, 49.
- 22 Suely Rolnik, "The Spheres of Insurrection: Suggestions for Combating the Pimping of Life," *e-flux journal*, no. 86 (2017) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/86/163107/the-spheres-of-insurrection-suggestions-for-combating-the-pimping-of-life/>.
- 23 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "Base Faith," *e-flux journal*, no. 86 (2017) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/86/162888/base-faith/>.
- 24 Guattari, *Three Ecologies*, 34.
- 25 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.
- 26 Guattari, *Three Ecologies*, 36.
- 27 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 172.
- 28 Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (Touchstone, 1968), 20.
- 29 Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, "Infra-facing," in *Affects, Interfaces, Events*, ed. Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen, Jette Kofoed, and Jonas Fritsch (Imbricate, 2021) <http://imbricate.press/book/affects-interfaces-events/infrac-facing/>.
- 30 For more on immediation, see *Immediation*, vols. 1–2, ed. Anna Munster, Erin Manning, Bodil Marie, and Stavning Thomsen (Open Humanities Press, 2019).
- 31 Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake* (Duke University Press, 2016).
- 32 Quoted in Rolnik, "Spheres of Insurrection."
- 33 Tommy Orange, *There There* (McLelland and Stewart, 2019), 11.
- 34 Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 68.
- 35 Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* (Alabama University Press, 2002).
- 36 Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body*, 14.

10/10

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022 Erin Manning
Out of the Clear