

## Dispositions

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To the memory of Colin Hood:

*We carry others, until others carry us.  
The carrying is the us.*



## Dispositions



Armed only with a notebook and a handheld global positioning device, **McKenzie Wark** tracks the secret passage of free time and free thought through the spaces of an everyday life lived increasingly in the shadow of the satellites. **Dispositions** records one writer's experience of art and everyday life while struggling to be at home in (and against) a world of global commerce and surveillance. **Dispositions** proposes a joyous but pragmatic anarchy of thought and writing as the antidote to the discipline that states and markets alike impose on knowledge and culture. **Dispositions** glides across the writing of Deleuze and Virilio, the art of Gursky, Eliasson, Parreno, the architecture of Murcutt and Gehry, the music of La Monte Young and DJ Spooky, the cinema of Luhrmann and Schnabel, the sights of Kings Cross in Sydney, Soho in London or Williamsburg in Brooklyn and a chance encounter with Rudi Giuliani as if there were a seamless connection between them, waiting to be discovered under arbitrary distinctions of genre, form and style.



Perhaps a state of being, whether attained or acquired, is a set of coordinates that give your position here with respect to there.

— DICK HIGGINS

The formula for overturning the world, we didn't seek it in books, but in wandering.

— GUY DEBORD



**3.55 PM EST**  
**North 40.71974°**  
**Elevation 75´**

**29th January 2001**  
**West 073.95769°**  
**23´ Accuracy**

The sun shines out of my ass. Or so it was once comforting to think. And so thought everybody. Man, the measure of all things. Or woman, as if that made much difference, up against the magnanimous spread of the world.

Consider the logistics of how things come to us; of how we come to things. Rocks and plants; flesh and steel. A world in which if there is some guiding light it is inhuman. It's all mesh of data, telemetry of moving bodies, resources allocated and deployed.

The live feed is no longer my breakfast. I am its breakfast. This caloric load comes off inventory. Some small quanta of stuff will move through the world making good its consummation. Run the movie in reverse: from mouth to fork to plate to grill to fridge to truck to store to plant to farm to seed to earth and rain and the sun that marks its melanomas on my ass.

But there are still those who can draw a golden beam from their ass to the skies. They have not lost perspective. Theirs is a power always born again. Theirs is a world they always array around their radiant centre.

Sun kings and sky gods: there is nothing they don't see that matters, there is nothing they can't do that matters. (Or so one might suppose). They camouflage their bodies, not their radiating souls.

Their ways become our ways, soon enough — their tools of command, control, communication. Soon enough these come to power pop up toasters. Speed and precision are the marks of rank. The digital divides all knowing from all known.

Leave it to these khaki lords of coordinates to turn the planet's surface into an orbiting football field. They grid it so they may gird it. Satellites orbit my ass. They free me from the need to know its disposition. They feed me with coordinates. No need to keep track of place or time when

there exists in the world the Pentagon's global positioning satellites and the global positioning device.

It arrived, much expected, in the mail today, the Garmin *Etrex*. Rubber buttons in black hole black on sky gray plastic, the lcd screen behind reassuring glass. The courier delivered it to the home address. Sign your name here, on another lcd screen. Tick off one more mission in the endless blipstream of delivery.

That home address, that singular string of alphanumeric, is an abstract way of grasping space, but not as pythagorean as global positioning. Coordinates for anywhere, anytime, all over the astroturfed surface of the world. An address for anywhere at all with a hopeful view of the sky.

Take the gray machine for a walk from home to a favourite cafe. Track the vector between the two positions. The great outdoors becomes an addressable space, like any home or hard drive.

*Noblesse Oblige*: The camo kings provide the signal free to everyone, everywhere, with one of these devices. It listens for the satellite's signals, their almanac of the seconds, and triangulates accordingly.

Aboard each satellite beats an atom heart, beating time into precise submission. That perfect time is broadcast to the world. A global rock-fest for the age of punk machines. Point the plastic gizmo at the sky and it counts the delay with which the perfect time imperfectly arrives, and estimates its distance from four titanium stars.

But there is a margin of error, a random factor. This pen tip is at the precise coordinates above — give or take 23 feet. Sometimes, the circle widens, the location less precise. There's always sand in the cogs somewhere, even if these days its the ionosphere, or the troposphere, where things get gritty.

We're all in the service now, and know exactly where our asses are. The luxury of accuracy — the fifth coordinate. Let X equal X. Your ass

is where and what you think it is. No wonder they pronounce him *Colon Powell*.

The English ruled the seas with their chronometers; now Americans rule the skies. Hold this gray ruler and hold with it the beat of empire. Garmin *Etrex*, digital sextant. On its cinereous face a picture of the world.

The perfect good for a perfect world. It arms me for that other struggle: to find what tiny wavering lines might steal away from all perfected surfaces. An art of digging bits that don't add up.

The sampling of the world as it passes, percepts buzzing the sensoria, affects tingling the nerve net, concepts bouncing about the frontal lobes as they flit by on their way to other theatres. But just for one moment, smudged in time and ink, they pass through the reticular error of this pen and into the cryptic bank of this page.

This new journal, bought especially, the paper ruled by latitude. The book square, the pages an unraveling map, an airless crack between each leaf. Opened for the first time here at this table, close to the glass wall, but hiding from the light it breathes.

This floor, bare and porous, was once treelike and now isn't. This instruction manual was also once living, living in the organic sense. Now it pauses between habitations. It holds in place the symbols by which one learns to point this gray toy to the sun and get for this location all the points the radio sky accommodates.

This zone, where this wood is floor, where this heat is coffee. This is what is here now, cooling in the darkening light. This skinny sun, this digital jazz, inhabiting the same air. This dissipating hangover, this cramp in the writer's hand.

To leak into the cracks in a perfect world and flee along them. That might be what home is now. A home that could be anywhere. Not elsewhere; anywhere. Life need not be elsewhere, always pressing nose to

glass. Home can be here. But here is anywhere. This where, now:  
Homing.

*It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home.* It is the ethos of the ethical to embrace anywhere as part of another home.

*Circular error probable:* the hole in the zero within which a missile falls, arm outstretched to greet its coordinates.

**4.00 PM EST**  
**North 40.71869°**  
**Elevation 111´**

**29th January 2001**  
**West 073.95620°**  
**26´ Accuracy**

There it abides, resisting description. White yet not while, a matted transparency. Solid yet tending not. Persisting in this its kind of time. Why would one think time has quantities, when here is time for the abiding that has a colour all its own? Yet which owns nothing, owes nothing, has no being but its eroding into the danken gray beneath. The cold in which this persists, slomo waterfall, shares these fingers in its curve of burning. *Rough jackets sample elderly years. Coma fuses cough out fearful diameters. Programs seethe to glue incongruous words.* Five words per sentence, each iteration, here a door away from that cool melt. An artist programs an inexhaustible stream of meaning. Then in the next room, the paintings, issue of that hand. *No Name Yet*, their handle. Frozen time their beat. Melting strata of paint, mimicking, for all the world, it's stone. This man paints time. Geology of morals. Time frozen, the sun reversed. Or so it seems. Mimesis is what it isn't. Snow and paint, each fools this mortal time with beats that know no heart.

**3.48 PM EST**  
**North 40.71379°**  
**Elevation -63´**

**2nd February 2001**  
**West 073.94454°**  
**33´ Accuracy**

The cell phone is on, expecting Tracy Ryan to call. Errors in coordination, data movement from point to point. Errors in dislocation, movement of vehicles through the sky, through the ground, under or over the river.

It is the expectation of guests that makes this place take on the colourings of home. Relational construct.

Rain intersects the pavement at something short of 90°. It intersects with time, intermittent. A pattern not a pattern, clumps of occurrence. Some eccentric algorithm beating on the pavement. Hear it chanting: *All go rhythm, all go rhythm . . .*

Idle vehicles contain combustions, immaculate disco. A lighting of gas and air, metal flung back, all to no immediate purpose. Power held in reserve.

A man walking, hammer in hand. Is this hammer's commute to its use or back to its home? The hammer, in between states, its sleepless rust, its imperceptible stress.

Every tool is a taming of violence, a home for violence. Unleashing yet still leashed. The sky gray *Etrex* slung neckwise, albatros of *target acquisition*. A talisman of precision's *cutting edge*.

Some Japanese girl snuffles while the boy talks on a cellphone. Her wrists thinner even than this that writes. They make a connection of not connecting. The comfort of indifference co-presence. They commune with nothing, but nonetheless commune.

Mel Gibson's teeth; Helen Hunt's cheek. They face down local habitations, calling all home to this boarded skin. Remind me to avoid that movie.

Why does the person standing near annoy? Too close for comfort.  
Within the perimeter of what this awareness needs to call an I an I.  
Circular error probable.

The pork shoulder over there is only 49¢ a pound. Unpigged.

**1.48 PM EST**  
**North 40.72218°**  
**Elevation 53´**

**4th February 2001**  
**West 073.95113°**  
**17´ Accuracy**

Trees are just racked leaves. These pigeons run some subroutine. Flap close, not too close. Each defined by a variable proximity to proximity. They are of one mind that rests in movement.

Flocks of cars ripples the atmosphere, churning particles. So long as there is air it is never quite quiet. Air has so much to say for itself. Sound is just bugged air.

Across the waters, through the haze: skyscraper! More tree than it looks.

Seagulls are another pattern, not just of white, but of distribution. They are bigger here, than where I come from. I am smaller.

That boy on the scooter is about as big as me relative to these seagulls as a relational perception. The boy comes to be against his mother's wishes. He has his context, I have mine. Every figure is a ground for another figure. Every ground a figure for another ground.

Fumbling for the rubber buttons on the *Etrex*. These gloves just make the cold more feelable. On bare skin, this cold is off the scale and can't touch at all. One shrinks into nothing except resistance to cold.

The way those dogs walk their people, keeping them tied to the reconnoitering smell. There is a dog world here of scent sensations. How this world must yield to another battery of senses. To a dog, the world exists to be sniffed. All animals have presumptions.

Know this position, but not these proteins. Space cut with lines, not primed with wafts. This language sieves for signs, not sense, not scents.

Cold is a sense, sense of economy, burning against drains on resources. Not stacked against this contingency for long. Unlike the trees,