

Almanac I

David Gauthier

University of Amsterdam

Sam Skinner

Manchester School of Art

Received: 13/01/2020

Accepted: 23/01/2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v1i1.30717>

Nautical almanacs give the positions of bright celestial objects relative to a specific geographic meridian, the line of longitude, at regular intervals throughout the year. Navigators may ascertain a ship's 'local time' by comparing timed observations from the ship to relevant figures in the almanac. The time difference is then converted to degrees of longitude and combined with the line of latitude, deduced by measuring the height of the sun and stars above the horizon, enabling a position to be 'fixed' for an instant. Fundamental to nautical almanacs' utility and production is their continual renewal to account for the changing positions of celestial bodies. Thus new observations and calculations must be made in perpetuum for almanacs to remain dependable and useful.

What would it mean for scholarly work to be captured as part of an almanac? This is the main question we, and others, posed ourselves when we first began to pursue the idea of a new materialist almanac (newmaterialism.eu). Echoing the character of nautical almanacs, this almanac seeks to provide tools and figurations for traversing the earth, albeit within more discursive and scholarly vessels. The nature of the almanac is one of endless evolution and oscillation between relevance and expedience, orientation and trajectory, frequency and position. Perhaps it might support inquiries into the questions: where do we find ourselves and where we do want to go? And particularly, within a context of new materialism we ask: how can

we continuously move beyond or around binary modes of travel and enquiry, simplistic conceptions of time, space, and place, which deliver only propositional knowledge. We hope a new materialist almanac will aid and bolster such renewable materialisms, situated knowledges (Haraway 1988; Rogowska-Stangret 2018), diffractive excursions (Geerts and van der Tuin 2016), and situationist *dérives*, which together may lead or drift toward new lines of flight and the rediscovery of older vanished paths.

Bibliography

Haraway, Donna (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575-599.

Rogowska-Stangret, Monika (2018, 22 March). *Situated Knowledges*. <http://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/s/situated-knowledges.html>

Geerts, Evelien & van der Tuin, Iris (2016, 27 July). *Diffraction & Reading Diffractionally*. <http://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/d/diffraction.html>