

[CALLALOO Call for Papers: Misperformance: Staging Law and Justice in the African Diaspora](#)

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A CALLALOO CALL FOR PAPERS

Misperformance

Staging Law and Justice in the African Diaspora

Callaloo invites papers for a special issue on “Misperformance: Staging Law and Justice in the African Diaspora” guest edited by Jason Allen-Paisant (University of Leeds, United Kingdom).

Project description:

Enlisting Blazevic’s and Cale Feldman’s (2014) concept of “misperformance,” this special issue of *Callaloo* wishes to consider forms of performance that engage the legal apparatuses of colonialism as a site for critical thought and intervention in the political present. We wish to harness the enabling potential of the concept of “failing yet performing acts” for providing new understandings of performative interventions that confront histories of racial violence and imperial crimes despite disavowal, lack of official recognition, and absence of memorialization.

The *mis-* in *misperformance* evokes two central and interrelated ideas. It evokes the failures of colonial justice to close and redress the social breaches left by colonial crimes. However, beyond the idea of failure, it speaks to the critical creative forms of agency that arise from such failure. It suggests notions of defiance, of a breaking of the rules, of resistance—in sum, a refusal to comply, a *misbehavior*. Indeed, misperformance points to an unwillingness to consider Empire’s crimes as closed or archived. It speaks to an opening *up* and an opening *out* of disavowed histories and of the modes of memory and remembering that such moves engage in the current moment. This interplay and interrelation between failure and its productive potentials can, we believe, animate a series of questions around justice, imperialism, and performance in the present.

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Notable examples of current performative interventions in the field of colonial law include *The Trial of Governor Eyre* (Jamaica), which uses law and theater together to confront a colonial atrocity during the British Empire; *Action Zoo Humain*, a project by Belgian theater maker Chokri Ben Chikha that sets up mock truth commissions in several Belgian cities around the colonial tradition of human zoos at the many world exhibitions and fairs that Belgium has hosted; and *A Trial of the Code Noir* by German public art exhibition association Documenta.

What new questions are such performances asking of colonialism for the current time? What new understandings do they provide with respect to the triangulation of trauma, memory, and performance? How are modes of performance (ritual, theatrical, etc.) being enlisted within movements for reparations for slavery and colonialism (e.g. in the US South, the Caribbean, Britain, France)? Are there benefits, insights, or philosophical understandings that accrue from the theatricalized performance of justice and the law within histories of colonial violence?

This special issue invites poetry, visual art, essays, and critical articles on misperformance and the law in the Black Atlantic. Submissions that consider any or a series of the following points are welcomed, but contributions may address other relevant points:

1. Tragedy and the law
2. Law and memory
3. Law and the aesthetics of performance
4. (Mis)performing the law
5. Play-trials/ performance-trials
6. Racism and justice
7. Justice and time
8. Justice and art
9. Justice and memory
10. Reparations and the performing arts
11. Justice, imperialism, and the nation
12. The work of Chokri Ben Chikha
13. The work of Julien Mabiala Bissila

Callaloo Submission Guidelines:

Manuscripts must be submitted online through the *Callaloo* manuscript submission system by **November 23, 2018**. Please see the submission guidelines here: <http://callaloo.expressacademic.org/login.php>. In order to submit a manuscript, you must register with the online system. The registration process will only take a few minutes. All manuscripts will follow the usual review process for submissions, and the *Callaloo* editor makes all final editorial decisions. Please note all manuscripts must follow the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (3rd Edition) and include in-text citations, a works cited, and endnotes for any commentary.

Please direct questions or other correspondence to the Guest Editor for this issue:

Jason Allen-Paisant (allenjasonj@gmail.com)

Guest Editor:

Dr. Jason Allen-Paisant is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds (UK). He holds a DPhil (Doctor of Philosophy) degree in Medieval and Modern Languages from the University of Oxford, where he was a Commonwealth Scholar, and an MPhil in French from the University of the West Indies. His research focuses mainly on theater and performance and on poetics in the Caribbean. He is the author of *Théâtre dialectique postcolonial: Aimé Césaire and Derek Walcott* and is currently at work on a second monograph that involves studies of contemporary Haitian theater. Dr. Allen-Paisant has a number of published and forthcoming articles in scholarly peer-reviewed journals, including *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, and *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*. He is a 2015 *Callaloo* poetry fellow.

Contact Email:

callaloo@tamu.edu

URL:

<http://callaloo.tamu.edu>