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## The Body Out of Place:

### Reading Percival Everett through Sara Ahmed

**Keywords:** Ahmed, Everett, affect, queer, race, intersectionality, erasure

**Abstract:** Ahmed's notion of comfort and discomfort between bodies and spaces helps to expand upon the purposes of movement and geography in Percival Everett's *Erasure*. The constant rejection the protagonist Monk Ellison faces in public and private spaces, and manifests internally toward himself, requires that his body respond. When we track his geography, we see a man in constant motion who, because of his out-of-place-ness, is forced first to express himself through the creation of a pastiche that mocks prevailing notions of blackness. When this fiction is met with widespread commercial success and critical acclaim, Monk creates of himself and his character an avatar that exists between these two bodies. This avatar, Stagg R. Leigh, embodies the political dissent Ahmed describes as indicative of queer bodies that do not adhere to the behavioral governances of compulsory heterosexual spaces: by establishing himself as passably black according to hegemonic expectations, but then being revealed as a fiction, he upends and threatens social order by escaping its rubrics for functional black bodies.

Through this Ahmedian-affective lens, one sees that black bodies in compulsorily racist environments, as queer bodies in compulsorily heteronormative environments, are forced to navigate expectations for their forms by glossing over, ignoring, suppressing, attempting to obscure, or having to acknowledge that which makes them different. A consequence of this interpellation is that society, for both black and queer bodies, rejects their forms and more readily accepts fictitious, derivative bodies in their stead, thus creating new forms to make invisible those stitches in the social skin that identify and alienate the individual from the space surrounding.