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Melvin L. Rogers is Associate Professor of Political Science and African American Studies. Rogers has wide-ranging interests located largely within contemporary democratic theory and the history of American and African-American political and ethical philosophy. His research is motivated by the political and social present and seeks to illuminate our current condition by directing our attention to undiscovered, underappreciated, or incompletely excavated resources in the history of political, social, and African-American thought. He is drawn to a series of “Big Questions”: How ought we understand the norms of conduct that underwrite political life? How should we talk about political relations and their development outside of electoral politics of juridical procedures? What might that language be and what concepts must we employ? Can we harness the power of self-regulation and self-improvement without resorting to stories or theories about absolute political and moral values? These questions inform his reflections on race, governance, and democracy. They guide his inquiry into the way actors in the past thought about the depth and quality of our capacity to be emotionally responsive to the pain of others. These questions direct his attention to the untapped potentiality of human agency and imagination that stands beyond the reach of domination and apathy.

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