THE
GARDEN
OF
IDEAS

IN THIS ISSUE

DESIGN BY ANDREW SHAW

Dear Reader,

Over this past year as editor-in-chief of *The Garden of Ideas*, I've been wrestling with the ultra-meta question: "what is philosophy?"

Most of the submissions we receive at the journal are of the standard philosophical form — analytical essays that dig into the depth and details of an argument, concept or conundrum. These are the bread and butter of philosophical work, but I would've been remiss as editor-in-chief to cut the menu off there. *The Garden of Ideas* has always striven after a nuanced, robust conception of philosophy. It was my first responsibility to keep the journal on this path by ensuring our pages reflect the breadth and diversity of philosophical contributions.

In regards to the all-important question, the answer turns out to be simple. Philosophy, at its very basis, is structured enquiry. Philosophy allows us to tackle the problems of the world, big or small, with strategy. It is a magnifying glass and a mirror, a sieve and a scalpel. Philosophy guides the frameworks of our inquiries, and our analyses of those frameworks.

There are many ways in which to pursue inquiry, of course. Painting and pottery, poetry and prose, all have philosophical potential. It has been my pleasure over this last year to lead a team of fantastic undergraduate philosophers who were responsive to this potential.

I believe that *The Garden of Ideas*' approach to philosophy points to an all-important truth: Philosophy is everywhere. If this amenable to you, welcome! You will find kindred spirits within the following pages. If you remain skeptical, welcome! I hope the following pages can open your eyes to a whole new world of philosophical wonder.

Rhea Shinde
Editor-In-Chief

ART BY KYRA WOLFENBARGER

RACE AND RACIAL FORMATION

HOW THE MUSLIM BAN WAS A RACIST ACT

ADAM SONNTAG

Introduction

In recent years, the United States was unfortunate to acquire a president who offered questionable wording throughout his career. The president I mean is Donald Trump, and the wording I refer to is him calling Mexicans criminals and rapists, implying that Blacks are uneducated thugs, and, topically, believing that the reduction of Muslims from entering the country will decrease security threats.[1] This last one refers to the "Muslim ban" passed in 2017, prohibiting Muslim-predominant countries from entering the country. My purpose is to critically engage in understanding the Muslim ban using a racial lens. My thesis is simple: I argue that the Muslim ban passed by former president Donald Trump was a racist act.

This paper is laid out as follows: First, I define race based on social constructionism assuming that this concept is the correct one. However, I show that my argument can work with some population naturalist accounts. Next, I posit a definition of racism based on Lawrence Blum's scholarship, which requires the inferiorization of and antipathy toward a racialized group. Then, I talk about two general frameworks for racism. I first discuss the division between wide- and narrow-scope racism and explain that this distinction is less useful than scholars have argued. I follow with the second framework, which I call "shapes," and I take a position that others call a *clustered* account. After this, I discuss the racialization process and the scopes of race and take the position that Muslims are going through what Professor Mendoza calls *racial formation*. I finish my paper by discussing the so-called "Muslim ban," and how we can understand and condemn Trump's racializing actions through these concepts. This paper centers most of its substantive discussion around Professor José Mendoza's recent paper on racism, xenophobia, and white nationalism.[2]

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[1] Nick Gass, "The 15 most offensive things that have come out of Trump's mouth," *Politico, (2015)*, https://www.politico.eu/article/15-most-offensive-things-trump-campaign-feminism-migration-racism/.

[2] José Jorge Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From! Racism, Xenophobia, and White Nationalism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2023).

What is race?

This paper assumes that social constructionism is the best account for understanding race. I take such an account to posit that race is not a biological kind, but instead, a socially occurring phenomenon based on prototypically linked superficial attributes such as skin color, facial hair, or especially ancestry and origin.[3] According to the social constructionist, race does *exist*, but not with the same biological significance that population naturalists contend it has. Instead, race *exists* on a nominalist basis—that is, on the basis that there are non-essential properties comprising certain persons, and these properties make up race *r* which are reapplied to people within the boundaries of these properties. If this sounds like a circular process, it is because it is. Nonetheless, fallacies do not prevent the process of racial construction, especially when people have misconceptions about the essential properties of humans.

Professor Mendoza makes sense of social constructionism about race in terms of *racial formation*. He argues that this is "the larger and often slower process by which racial categories come into existence and are maintained."[4] Race is not categorized by something determinative in a person, but rather by superficial attributes that, again, people are recognized by others (or themselves in many cases) for deciding their race. Hence, the only difference between social constructionism about race and racial formation is that the former is framed as an ideology while the latter is framed as a process, otherwise, they have similar meanings. With our definition of race, we can now move to defining and understanding racism.

What is racism?

In order to even talk about racism, we must first come to a general definition of what it is. Lawrence Blum provides the best account of how we can define such a term. He offers up two "paradigms" or general themes that racism has. The first is its character of *inferiorization*, which Blum describes is:

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[3] For early social constructionist accounts of this, see Adrian Piper, *Passing for White, Passing for Black* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), or Michael Root, *How We Divide the World* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1998), S632.

[4] Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From," 404.

linked to historical racist doctrine and racist social systems. Slavery, segregation, imperialism, apartheid, and Nazism all treated certain groups as inferior to other groups (mostly the dominant group, although sometimes other non-dominant racial groups) by reason of their biological nature.[5]

Indeed, when one observes another for their racial attributes, and infers that the race they belong to is of a higher ranking or classification, the justification of racial ills is caused by this process of inferiorization of that group. Nazism is a good example of inferiorization. Germany, wanting to blame someone for their loss in the First World War, used the Jews because they were a distinct group who could be easily identified and thus racialized, justifying Jewish inferiorization and dehumanization. Hence, inferiorization is one of the two sufficient "paradigms" of racism.

The second "paradigm" is race-based *antipathy*. Simply put, this encompasses racial bigotry, hostility, and hatred.[6] Blum uses the example of the Makah tribe of the Olympic Peninsula to show the character of this paradigm. The tribe announced in 1999 their initiative to hunt whales to instill pride in their youth, causing the death of a whale in May of that year. This act was permitted by the government but created outrage among non-Native Americans in Washington. Despite the reasonable concerns and arguments against this, many displayed racialized hatred toward Native Americans. Blum offers this example of a letter written to the Seattle Times against said action: "I have a very real hatred for Native Americans now. It's embarrassing, but I would be lying if I said it wasn't the truth."[7] Thus, because the tribe committed an action that was disagreed with by non-Native Americans, the latter gained antipathy toward the group. Now, it must be noted that indigeneity and race are *not* the same two categorizations.[8] Nor should we believe that the writer carried antipathy toward the group because of an intrinsic desire to subjugate a racial group in particular. Nevertheless, as Blum argues, perpetrators as such are motivated by the racial characterizations of the group.[9] It is for this reason that antipathy is the second sufficient characterization of racism.

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[5] Lawrence Blum, "'Racism': Its Core Meaning," in *I'm Not A Racist But...: The Moral Quandary of Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 8.

[6] Blum, "Racism," 8.

[7] Alex Tizon, "E-Mails, Phone Messages Full Of Threats, Invective," *Seattle Times*, May 23, 1999, https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19990523&slug=race23m.

[8] I am indebted to my editor, Andrew Shaw, for pointing out this specific clarification.

[9] As is the case with indigeneity in the U.S., the history of poor political relations and cleansing could be an example of how such racial characterizations have come about. This relates to racial formation which, as mentioned earlier, is the process of social constructionism about race where people are recognized as non-white in particular. I must

The shape of racism

There are two broad frameworks of how the concept of racism can be understood, which I will spend a decent amount of time on. The first framework asks about the shape that racism takes. One of these shapes is a *doxastic* kind of racism, which Kwame Anthony Appiah gives us a good account of. He argues that racism is composed of propositions and dispositions. The propositions are that there are racial essences—what he calls racialism, or the thought that race is a fixed biological property or essence which determines a person's characteristics and abilities—and that races are morally significant.[10] The dispositions are the tendency to assent to these false propositions about race, despite being in the face of convincing evidence against racialism.[11] Taking Plato's conception of *doxa*, Appiah's account is called doxastic because it positions racism as a belief and opinion about races.

Another shape that racism takes is an *institutional* kind. According to Lawrence Blum, as differentiated from how it was first defined in 1967 by Ture and Hamilton, institutional racism refers to "a practice that is itself free of racial bias but in its implementation has a disproportionately negative effect on subordinated racial groups."[12] Being distinct from other kinds, institutional racism is more neutral in the sense that it does not require the participant to be a racist, but merely for him to cause racial harm. Blum cites the seniority system in the workplace as an example. Because previous racial discrimination has caused Black and Latinx employees to lose their jobs, they are more likely to be last hired in workplaces, and when companies must fire employees for budgeting, the last hired is the first fired under the seniority system. Despite being a completely reasonable system that keeps the most experienced workers, the institutional practice perpetuates harm against people who fall under certain subordinated races and is thus institutional racism.

The last shape that racism takes is a *volitional* kind. J. L. A. Garcia will give us the best account of this. He argues that racism "resides primarily in people's desires, feelings, and volitions."[13] These take on two principal forms to him. On the one hand, racism consists of racial antipathy, such that there is a desire for people assigned to a racial group to experience

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also note that my argument relates not to how individuals pigeon hole themselves, but rather about how individuals are depicted by others.

[10] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Anatomy of Racism," in *Racisms* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1990): 15

[11] Appiah, "Anatomy of Racism," 15-16.

[12] Blum, "Racism," 22

[13] Jorge Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism: A Critical Examination of Some Recent Social Philosophy" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (1997): 30

harm *ispo facto* because they should suffer.[14] On the other hand, racism consists of a differential treatment, such that there is a moral disregard for a person because he belongs to race *r*.[15] We might notice here that these are very similar to Blum's account because it happens that "moral disregard" and "inferiorization" share a lack of attention to moral principles that should guide fair and respectful treatment. Nonetheless, moral disregard also looks like one not caring enough to pursue the rectification of racial injustice, according to Garcia. Hence, if someone is unaware that a certain action he does greatly participates in racialized harm, Garcia is willing to call him a racist simply because he does not care enough to learn about the consequences of his actions and change them.

Garcia attempts to account for doxastic and institutional racism through his volitional conception of racism. He argues that "[a] person who is racially disaffected in such a way is a racist, and her actions, beliefs, feelings, hopes, fears, etc. will be racist insofar as her racism infects them."[16] This is called the *infection model* because Garcia argues that the doxastic and institutional kinds of racism originate through negative desires and feelings toward racial groups. The above quote explains the doxastic kind and Garcia argues that institutional racism happens when administrators' beliefs spread and serve to rationalize racial disaffection in the hearts of those who formulate and execute its policies.[17] However, I disagree with this model because I believe that it ignores the character of institutional racism. For example, if we look again at Blum's seniority example, it is rationalized through means of maintaining the most experienced employee, and not necessarily through racialized antipathy. Notwithstanding, I would agree that the seniority system is an example of institutional racism. What this means is that the character of institutionalized racism is that the practices can be informed by rationale that would otherwise not cause racialized injustice in other locations, but becomes racially partial due to the context within which the rationale occurs. Nonetheless, although I am monist about the metaphysics of race, my position on racism is that it can take its shape in all of these forms, giving me what scholarship has called a *clustered* account. This distinction is crucial because, whereas Garcia would only hold the volitional account to characterize the shape of racism, I allow any of the three to be sufficient shapes of racism.

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[14] Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism," 29.

[15] Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism," 29.

[16] Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism," 29.

[17] Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism," 30.

The scope of racism

The second framework for understanding racism is by its "scopes," or how the moral opprobrium of racism is to be understood. One of these scopes takes a *wide* approach, arguing that the term "racism" should be used broadly for all racial wrongs, regardless of their moral severity. This would mean that an ignorant person is just as racist if they hold up a degrading symbol as someone who does so intentionally. Notice that I use the term "ignorant" on purpose. The intention of the individual does not matter under this account. On the contrary, the only thing that matters here is that *something* (i.e., an act, symbol, or joke) disproportionately inferiorizes and displays antipathy to racialized groups.

The opposite of this account takes a *narrow* scope, arguing that "racism" should be used for only the most severe racial wrongs. Blum will give us a convincing account of this scope. He argues that a narrow-scope conception can

> avoid[] conceptual inflation and moral overload[, allowing it to] facilitate interracial communication, and . . . diminish an inhibiting fear of the dreaded charge of "racism" while also encouraging a more morally nuanced vocabulary for discussing race-related phenomena.[18]

There are a few things to unpack from this account. The first is that Blum is afraid of conceptual inflation and moral overload. Two justifications for this fear is that the term was originally utilized to condemn the Nazi concentration camps[19] and that ordinary people will not be willing to engage in conversation if one flagrantly calls them a racist because of such high moral connotations.[20] Blum believes that, due to the origins of the term as a substantial expression of condemnation against Nazism, people who are called "racists" for anything less than intentional white supremacy may take offense and thus disregard those labeling them. Hence, he believes that categorizing all race-based issues under the blanket term "racism" is problematic. This is because it conceptually expands the overall meaning of the term and, at the same time, morally overwhelms the principles of good and bad in the actions being discussed, rendering it counterproductive in conversations. For this reason, he argues, we should narrow the scope of how we employ the term "racism."

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[18] Blum, "Racism," 8.
[19] Blum, "Racism," 4.
[20] Blum, "Racism," 3.

This account is not without objections. For example, Michael Hardimon's biggest contention is that we should not withhold our moral censure even if people abstain from conversation after calling them racists. "Such individuals *should* feel bad," he argues, "They ought to feel shame."[21] Hardimon argues that the fact that individuals retreat from conversations is a necessary consequence of condemning a person's moral character. Blum overlooks the fact that *nobody* enjoys moral condemnation. However, such condemnation can be valuable when *others* witness the moral censure of someone's character. In this scenario, observers have the opportunity to learn from those passing judgment about what is considered right and wrong, even if it means causing the receiving end to feel bad about his actions.

Hardimon also argues that narrowing the scope of racism prevents certain clear cases of racial ills from being labeled as racist. These include acts like racial microaggressions, unconscious racial antipathy, derogation and indifference, and implicit racial bias.[22] Now I concede that these instances should be considered racist in themselves. However, although I agree with Hardimon that we should condemn racist people, I do not particularly appreciate how Hardimon framed this argument about these categories. As Blum argues against moral inflation in instances of morally suspect behavior regarding race, such as his example of a *very* ignorant white police officer putting a noose around a black police officer's motorcycle as a mere joke, I cannot help but notice that this is greatly different than something like unconscious implicit racial bias or Hardimon's other examples. The former should not count the officer as necessarily racist because his actions misused a symbol that, by chance, correlates to the history of society. For example, there is nothing inherent in putative conceptions of any racial attributes that could inform the officer that hanging a noose on a black officer's motorcycle is a race-based act of wrongdoing. He could not look at the black officer's racialized attributes and know that nooses mean a *racial* ill.

This ignorance is greatly different from microaggressions. Although they are unconscious, these ills are based on experiences one has with the world, particularly with people falling under racial categories. We can defer here to the so-called "weapon bias" test. When shown pictures of a black man, researchers determined that whites and blacks were

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[21] Michael Hardimon, "Should We Narrow the Scope of 'Racism' to Accommodate White Sensitivities?" in *Critical Philosophy of Race* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2019), 228.

[22] Hardimon, "Should We Narrow the Scope of 'Racism,'" 239.

more likely to misidentify a harmless object with a gun than if the man was white. With this, Hardimon rightly argues that

> There is evidence that implicit bias occurs, that it occurs in almost everyone, that it is practically engaged, and that it harms people. Implicit racial bias is thus a form of unwarranted racial preference and discrimination and, being such, it is a form of racism, at least sometimes.[23]

Again, I agree with Hardimon that this is an instance of racism. The question, then, is, how is this different from ignorantly misusing a symbol against someone belonging to race *r*? I contend that the unconscious harms that Hardimon is arguing are racist and require individuals to unconsciously develop unwarranted preferences and discrimination toward a racial group through *confirmation bias*. One has to actively engage with racialized groups to slowly gain unconscious beliefs about them. Unconscious beliefs do not simply come from nowhere, but rather, they develop through misinformation about, for instance, racialized groups. Hence, I argue that Blum would count unconscious implicit bias, microaggressions, and so on, as acts of racism because they *are* serious moral failings and violations in the area of race. I do not see how Hardimon contributes to the debate in this part of his argument.

If I am correct, the debate against narrow- and broad-scoped racism turns on whether a racist *occurrence* was caused by racial *experiences*. If this is the case, narrow-the-scope scholars argue—or *should* be arguing—that these microaggressions are cases of serious moral failings about race and are thus examples of racism. I highlight this debate in particular because it specifies how to go about morally condemning certain actions. Without my clarifications, morally condemnable racist actions can be minimized and ignored.

The racialization process and scopes of race

An important point to revisit is how exactly individuals become racialized. As mentioned earlier, Professor Mendoza posits the idea of *racial formation*, which is similar to social constructionism about race, such that it is a social phenomenon that characterizes individuals into categories based on superficial attributes, but, as mentioned earlier, this is a process rather than an ideology. What matters here is that certain practices, prototypically

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[23] Hardimon, "Should We Narrow the Scope of 'Racism,'" 230.

linked attributes, clothing,[24] language, geographical origins, and many more categories[25] can be used in racial formation. A connected idea to this is the process of *racialization*. Mendoza defines this as

> the experience or process in which a person, practice, or thing is situated within already established racial categories, even while not necessarily constructing, challenging, or disturbing these categories.[26]

Hence, whereas racial formation is the larger process of creating and maintaining racial categories, racialization is fitting people, practices, or other things into these racial categories.

Racial formation and racialization cannot be adequately understood unless we come to terms with the *scope* of race. Whereas the scope of racism relates to the realm of its moral opprobrium, the scope of race asks whether Latinx, MENA (Middle-East/North Africa) or, particularly for this paper, Muslims fall under the category of race. This argument turns on whether we can consider these groups as being *racialized*. We shall refer to the positions of the scopes of racism as *constrained* (or restricted, containing only Black, White, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander) and *expanded* (a non-exhaustive list including Latinx, MENA, and Muslim). At first glance, the debate seems obvious when looking at Muslims. This is a religion, not a race. However, they are more complex than just people with certain ideologies. These are adherents of Islam who make up approximately 93% of the Middle East/North Africa region.[27] This causes distinct attributes such as non-White skin color, geographical origins, and religious affiliation. Some religious and local practices cause women to wear hijabs and all Muslims to wear modest, clean, and decent clothing that does not attract much attention, such as wearing earth-tone colors. Discreet Muslims may tend toward other obvious Muslims, causing the former to become racially associated with the

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[24] I speak here particularly about hijabs, not necessarily about gendered clothing. I will not give other examples apart from a hijab, but I imagine more could be developed.

[25] Some other general categories include socioeconomic status, educational background, cultural affiliations, occupation and industry, and social networks. Ones that enter the prototype are those that have been used to racialize people in the past, such as skin color. However, I must be explicit that this list is non-exhaustive and fluctuates depending on the racial categorization. I cannot, also, pinpoint any necessary categories because of the complexities of racism. For scholarship on this difficulty, see Mills, Charles W. "'But What Are You Really?': The Metaphysics of Race." In *Blackness Visible* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 41–66, where he analyzes racial categorizations against the backdrop of societal expectations.

[26] Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From," 404.

[27] "Pew Research Center, 'The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,' Pew Research Center, April 2, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/. I must also note that I refrain from simply referring to the racialized group as MENA because geographic origins and skin color are not the only physical determinants of Muslims.

latter. The point is that there are more than just beliefs and ideologies about Muslims that identify them.

As I have said, proponents of the constrained position ostensibly find their argument easiest concerning Muslims: Islam is a religion, so the Muslim marker cannot also be a race marker in a similar way that Black, White, and Asian are. If this were the case, proponents of this position must then, unfortunately, concede that the constrained races are not formed through prototypically linked attributes, but instead through something I am unaware of.[28] Arguing that Muslims are not becoming a race appears possible if one was a population naturalist because they might argue that there is no way to carve nature at its joints to understand religion as a race. However, this possibility must be abandoned when noting that the *Qur'an* necessitates intrafaith marriage for women, and intrabook marriage (with Jews, Christians, or Muslims) for men, thus implying that the isolation of the population of Muslims starts when someone practices Islam because it is embedded in its doctrine.[29] One may argue that intrafaith marriage does not imply isolation, but previous data showing that 93% of the MENA region are Muslim gives a convincing argument otherwise.[30] My point is, that Muslims being a race—that is, a pan-race insofar that they are not a homogenous group because a constrained racialized person can also be a Muslim—can be justified on both social constructionism and population naturalism, but, as I will show, it as at least *in the process* of racial formation.

Professor Mendoza gives an account of how *xenophobia* might cause racial formation. Particularly, this is centralized around the practice of veiling. He argues that the inferiorization and antipathy toward Muslim women about abandoning the practice of veiling contributes to the national race project. He contends that,

> even if the practice of veiling is not *racialized*, at least not on a restricted conception of race, it is still possible that the hostility and discrimination directed against this practice and its practitioners is itself part of a *racial formation* process.[31]

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[28] Moreover, if what forms them is oppression, then Muslims will *certainly* be going through racial formation, hence proving my point faster than I do.

[29] Leeman, Alex B. "Interfaith Marriage in Islam: An Examination of the Legal Theory Behind the Traditional and Reformist Positions." Indiana Law Journal (Bloomington) 84, no. 2 (2009): 743–71.

[30] This is also exemplified in Indonesia, where the largest number of Muslims live within a single country. For instance, Muslims make up 87% of their total population, which is roughly 242 million. "5 facts about Muslims and Christians in Indonesia," Pew Research Center, March 28, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/03/28/5-facts-about-muslims-and-christians-in-indonesia/.

[31] Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From," 407.

When individuals, especially from the United States, contribute to these practices of xenophobia against individuals with attributes that are distinguishable from Whites, they cast them outside of the Whiteness racial category and thus contribute to the racial formation process of Muslims. Implications for this are addressed further below, but for now, it should be recognized that, apart from group pride and unity, racialization comes with false stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination that negatively affect the lives of racialized individuals.

The Muslim ban

The so-called "Muslim ban" was passed in 2017 by then-president Donald Trump. The actual title of this executive order was "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," and constrained members from six predominantly Muslim nations (Chad, Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia), as well as Venezuela and North Korea, from having the ability to obtain their green cards for the United States. North Korea should be disregarded here because they counted for only 61 affected visas for the year prior and Venezuela should also be disregarded here because it only affected a few political leaders and their families about minor entry requirements.[32] However, according to the ACLU, "nearly every single person from the Muslim-majority countries [was] barred from getting a green card, no matter what family, business, or other U.S. connections he or she [had]."[33] Because of the indiscreet nature of this proclamation, it was reasonably labeled the "Muslim ban."

This ban was not without contestation. After it was ordered, ACLU-WA lawyers, for example, rushed to SeaTac airport to help incoming Muslims enter the country. With the support of public officials and more than 1,000 protestors, the individuals were able to enter.[34] On the back end, various legal challenges were filed against the executive orders implementing the travel ban. For instance, several federal judges issued temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions against the ban, arguing that it violated the U.S. Constitution by discriminating against individuals based on their religion.[35] Moreover, the original executive order underwent *multiple* revisions in response to legal challenges and court decisions. The administration modified the list of countries and adjusted certain

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[32] ACLU, "Timeline of the Muslim Ban."
[33] ACLU, "Timeline of the Muslim Ban."
[34] ACLU, "Timeline of the Muslim Ban."
[35] ACLU, "Timeline of the Muslim Ban."

provisions to address some of the legal concerns raised. The legal battles continued through various iterations of the ban.[36] Hence, many individuals and organizations highly disagreed with Trump's decision to ban individuals from the six countries for the sake of national security.

Understanding and condemning Trump's actions

The first step in figuring out if Trump's act was racist is to understand whether it was malicious on racial grounds. I argue that it was. Recalling earlier to what attributes can be used in racial formation, geographical origins is a large one. Indeed, earlier race essentialists believed that geographical origins were paramount for determining the *best* races. I turn to Johann Blumenbach as my key example. In 1795, in his work on naturally varying mankind, he writes about this group which he calls the Caucasians:

> I have taken the name of this variety from *Mount Caucasus*, both because its neighbourhood, and especially its southern slope, produces the most beautiful race of men, I mean the *Georgian*; and because all physiological reasons converge to this, that in that region, if anywhere, it seems we ought with the greatest probability to place the autochthones of mankind.[37]

The very origins of the term "Caucasian" result from a geographical location. Without further qualification, it is the main argument of population naturalism that race can be defined through isolated populations in certain regions of the world. Thus, geographic origin is a category that is important for the formation of races. I contend that Trump engaged in the racialization of Muslims by using geographic origins as a basis to decide which countries should be denied access to the United States. In other words, these regions had overlapping characteristics, meaning that not everyone in them was Muslim. However, because Muslims comprise a large majority in these countries, Trump exploited this racializable attribute as a means to target Muslims.

Not only was this wrongful act on racial grounds, but it is indeed a case of racism. We must engage again with our definition of racism, that it finds its "paradigm" *at least* in inferiorization, yet I will also argue for Trump's antipathy toward Muslims. Starting with the

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[36] ACLU, "Timeline of the Muslim Ban."

[37] Johann Blumenbach, "On the Natural Variety of Mankind," in *The Idea of Race* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000): 31.

inferiorization, Trump was under the conception that banning Muslims would create safer conditions for the United States. This is inferiorizing for multiple reasons. The first is that it prevents Muslims from practicing their religious freedom in the United States. It assumes that individuals who belong to a particular religious faith are inherently dangerous. Another reason is that labeling a religious group as inherently dangerous can dehumanize them. By reducing their agency to a mere security threat, it creates an "us versus them" mentality, risking denying their humanity. A final reason this is inferiorizing is because it saturates collective blame upon an entire group. Whereas justifiable discrimination might be imprisoning a murderer, Trump's denial of these countries collectively implies that they are all deserving of blame for the security threat. Because blame is closely tied to culpability, it makes it easy for Muslims as a whole to become inferiorized.

At first glance, determining whether Trump holds antipathy toward Muslims poses a challenging burden of proof. If racial antipathy is categorized by Blum as "racial bigotry, hostility, and hatred," it would seem that intent must be proven. Fortunately, it can be. I have already shown that Muslims have been racialized and are in the process of racial formation due to xenophobia. Given my analysis that Trump's actions were inherently race-based, it becomes evident that he engaged in the broad categorization of all Muslims, effectively racializing them, under the pretext of a perceived security threat to restrict their entry into the country. This deliberate grouping of individuals based on their religious affiliation suggests a manifestation of racial antipathy in Trump's decision-making.

My analysis of the different forms of racism is crucial for both categorizing and condemning Trump's actions. His behavior could span any of the three shapes of racism: volitional, doxastic, and institutional. First, Trump might truly see Muslims as holding lower moral significance than others, which would be volitional racism. This perspective seems particularly convincing given his explicit statements about Muslims being security threats. Second, it's possible that Trump simply hates Muslims as such, a form of doxastic racism, although, admittedly, this is harder to substantiate definitively. Third, his actions had disproportionately negative effects on Muslims, fitting the definition of institutional racism, especially if these actions contribute to the inferiorization of the group. Ultimately, I argue that Trump believes Muslims are inferior *and* harbors antipathy towards them. Given the racializing nature of his actions, they are, by definition, racist.

More implications can be noted here. Even if one objects that this action does not make Trump a racist, his actions nonetheless utilize geographic origins in the process of

racial formation of Muslims. Recall that Mendoza does some work here. Similar to the practice of veiling, he argues that "the hostility and discrimination directed against this practice and its practitioners is itself part of the *racial formation* process."[38] As I have shown, since Trump's actions naturally contribute to hostility and discrimination, not merely against a practice, but *against geographic origins*, they also contribute to Muslim racial formation. Mendoza would allow for Trump to be morally condemned on the basis that he is contributing to White supremacy and White nationalism,[39] but this is not necessary here because Trump's actions were racializing.

In summary, racism is the inferiorization or display of antipathy toward a racialized individual or group. This can occur on account of one's *doxa*, volition, and through an institution or systemic means. Despite intellectual luminaries dividing racism into different "scopes," I have argued that both sides consider serious moral failings and violations in the area of race to be instances of racism. I have shown that Muslims have experienced what Mendoza calls *racial formation*, causing the religion to become a pan-race. This process is exemplified in xenophobia and through further racial formation by demonizing geographic origins. Trump's actions can be called racist because he clearly inferiorized and likely held antipathy toward a racialized group.

The implications of this account help us understand why and how Muslims are treated indifferently in the United States. The *why* is because their racialized attributes are demonized and inferiorized, and the *how* is because this makes it easy for individuals and groups to justify antipathy toward them. Identifying that Muslims are a group currently engaged in the process of racial formation helps to address attacks against them or their superficial attributes as deserving of high condemnation because it can lead to further inferiorization and antipathy from non-Muslim individuals who misunderstand Muslims. The least that this account could do is encourage dialogue about racializing practices. When community members understand that individuals who wear hijabs, have their origins in other nations, or belong to another religion are not inherently bad people and deserve the same rights as others, perhaps people will stop inferiorizing and holding antipathy toward people for no good reason.

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[38] Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From," 407.
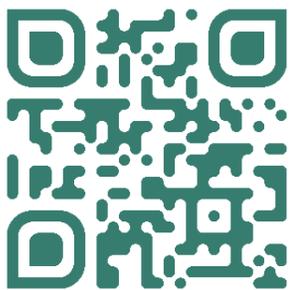[39] Mendoza, "Go Back to Where You Came From," 408.

III

ISHITA SURI

Scan for accompanying audio recording (translation to right)

This universe, a bundle of paper
Blow a draft, it will fly away

This universe, a bale of hay
Light a fire, it will burn

This universe, a clod of soil
A droplet of water, it will melt

So, my dear, this life is precious. If we commit bad karma now, who knows what we will end up as in our next one? If we do good karma, God may give us a good rebirth.

If this poem is labour, then I am on strike. My hands are ill. Too ill to write.

For hundreds of years they hadn't a moment to rest — and so, they remember everything. How to write a poem, how to wash dishes, how to grind wheat inside the चलतीचक्की, the ever-churning mill of life.

I know Kabir cried because of them. I know Kabir cried for them.

But then… he cried for all of us. He cried for my grandmother, who, caked in the dirt from her fields to where her complexion was of the Earth, showed me her own bloodied, cracked hands and said, "girl, you best work your mind because your hands are too soft to be bloodied." He cried for my mother, whose father spoiled her (his youngest)… told her she doesn't have to work for neither man nor employer… but now she does both the dishes and the 9-to-5. And combined, they cried for me, because they knew it is bad karma to be born a woman, to be born diseased. That the labour of existing in the world is hardest when it takes the female form.

And like them, I cry. I cry in the shower at the end of a long day because I can hear an inner voice reminding me to slow down… "pay attention to your symptoms." But like an alarm clock ringing into perpetuity… I hit snooze, eternally. I cry because my father almost named me Simran — remembrance of God, of self — cruelly ironic in an economy where the sacred is supplanted by the mechanical, the divine by the disenchanted. I cry because Bulleh Shah, too, wanted to know himself beyond his work as a sheepherder.

बुल्ला की जाणां मैं कौंण ?

I cry because I've been born into a world of illness, but I've been given the poetry of mothers and grandmothers and mystics to help me survive. I cry because I've been ill for 19 long years… and 45 years before that… and 76 years before that… and hundreds of fucking years before that… since the creation of cartesian time. I cry because I am unprofessional. I cry because I am PMSing, because I am hormonal, because I'm crazy. I cry because those before me have cried. I cry because it's tradition. Memory. Medicine.

If this poem is labour, then I am on strike. My hands are ill, too ill to write.

But you needn't worry about me, for I can still cry. Passed down for hundreds of years, my tears have written poetry, they've washed dishes, they've survived. So next time I break down, next time I'm not fine… Next time I have fever and you see me cry… please give me grace, give me space, give me time… because the tears that I shed are never just mine.

THE LION TRAPPING APPARATUS

DYLAN JONES

A stately black suit bombarded Maxwell's square of isolation. He rattled his head and left the doldrum daydream to which he was diligently attending. Kings Cross in morning - Monday - Edinburgh Waverly in evening - McMuffin for breakfast - though no one remembers breakfast.

"I hope you don't mind the intrusion," the suit stated with his piercing brown eyes lasered onto Maxwell's forehead, just out of direct eye contact. "The other table booths were occupied, and I have some matters to attend to."

"Oh not one bit," lied Maxwell. He had a sense of ownership of this 10-square-foot section of the train car since departure. Mandatory pleasantries about the weather were exchanged, as have 94% of Brits in the last 6 hours according to the BBC, and he learned the suit had a name, Candor, and a large brown package which he hoisted carefully into the overhead storage.

"What's in that package above your head?"

"Oh, that's a MacGuffin"

"What is a MacGuffin?"

"Well, it's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands," said Candor, as though this were common knowledge.

"Lions in Scotland? Well, I am no zoologist, but I have never heard of lions in Scotland!"

A content smirk slowly built on Candor's face, "But have you ever been to the Scottish Highlands?"

Maxwell paused, and replied, "No, come to think of it I have not. I have spent most of my life in London. I am heading to Edinburgh for business matters. I work in distributing for GENERI CORP, the finest distributor of office supplies. In fact, I am on my way to the

University of Edinburgh to ensure they have enough paper clips. Fascinating stuff really, it may surprise you that. . ."

"That lions are so frequently a symbol of heraldry all over this United Kingdom, finding their way onto escutcheons and football club logos. You may wonder how they could depict such a beast without having seen one in the flesh?" Candor interjected.

Maxwell pursed his lips and squinted, deep in thought. "Yes, that is quite the question, and I will admit to having pondered this before." He looked left out the window and saw the macaroon-colored fur that billowed up and down. He envisioned piercing eyes hidden in the middle of a mane. He turned right and saw the contrasting gray of the North Sea. The small white triangle of a sail could be spotted drifting idly alone carried by the vagaries of wind. The train often skirted near the coastline, making it popular for sightseers.

"How many have you caught?" asked Maxwell.

"Well, presumptuous as you may be," Candor chuckled, "it depends on what you define as caught, you see? I've seen them before, the lions. They caught my eye, you could say. Majestic creatures, but I was so flummoxed I failed to act, bringing me here, on my second excursion."

"How does the apparatus. . ."

". . . Dooo I feel about this in retrospect? Great question, Maxwell! You see, there is a quote so often attributed to Emerson - Life is a journey, not a destination - but if you actually do your due diligence, you would find he never said it at all! But you know the wonderful thing? It doesn't matter at all! People still find meaning in it, and Emerson still impacts them. Does this make sense?"

Maxwell nodded repeatedly, "Yes, yes it does. How much do you want for it?"

"My apparatus?"

"Yes."

"Maxwell, it is a family heirloom it is not for sale, and that is final."

"1,000 quid?"

"2,000 and you have a deal."

A check was deftly signed, dated, and dignified on the table in between them. A shake of hands and the package was his. They became strangers after, and only the click-clack of the tracks was heard. Candor began scribbling furiously in his spiral-bound notebook, and Maxwell placed the package, which was quite thin and rectangular, near his feet, clutching it with one hand.

When the train arrived in Edinburgh Candor left with a stately and solemn farewell, but Maxwell remained, opting to take another train to Inverness. This was the farthest north he had ever been. He nighted in Inverness, in a quaint hostel near the River Ness which split the city in two, and spent the night on the left side, making sure to never cross to the right. Maxwell felt like an artist in the lobby of the hostel the next morning, casting himself differently to every stranger he met, but by noon he left, carrying the package in hand. He boarded bus number 16 in Farraline Park and took the 8-mile ride south to Loch Ness.

The water was dark, almost black from the peat. He was wandering the ruins of Urquhart Castle, located along a small headland along the narrow loch. Some volunteers told him that William the Lion had a castle at Urquhart in the 12th century, but that some scholars contested it. He stood at the edge of the headland, at a mild cliff, and thought l'appel du vide, which he remembered from his days as a schoolboy in French class. He missed learning French and sat down, mourning the loss of an old passion. He had never even been to Paris. The package leaned against him. He stood up, grabbed it, and hurled it into the water. It landed on the surface and drifted for a bit, before slowly sinking and capsizing, with only the small triangle edge visible on the surface before disappearing. He sat back down grinning ecstatically, thinking that was the best purchase he has ever made. His next stop: Paris.

Endnote: This piece was heavily inspired by an interview of Alfred Hitchcock: https://vimeo.com/12375002.

ART BY KYRA WOLFENBARGER   24

STOID VOID

EMMA EVANS

Can nothing be something? While this question may seem to be an obvious 'no' at first glance, it is more complicated than one might think. And that is because of void. Those who have studied the Stoic interpretation of void disagree on how to answer this question. Even though they tend to agree that void must be something , there are various answers to what kind of something it can be. De Harven's claim, however, provides a stronger and more reasonable explanation of void. As an incorporeal, void does not follow the criteria for existence. Nevertheless, void still falls under the umbrella of 'Something', so therefore it subsists. In this essay, I will begin by looking at the source texts on Stoic void, including writings quoted by de Harven from Cleomedes. Next, I will explore both Todd and de Harven's analysis of void. After doing so, I will then dive further into the differences between their viewpoints, and how they come to different conclusions about how void should be classified. Finally, I will explain how de Harven's conclusion aligns more closely with and is a better interpretation of the source texts on Stoic void.

The source texts on Stoic void are difficult to find, so for this essay I will be relying mainly on sources used by Todd and de Harven. De Harven uses writings from Cleomedes, a Stoic philosopher with a passion for astronomy, that state, in essence, "(1) The extra-cosmic void…is what extends into infinity…from all sides…. And of this, (2) what is occupied by body is called place, (3) while what is not occupied will be void. (Cleomedes, Cael. i 1, 17-19 [Todd]=SVF 2.538+)" (pg. 407, Section B). She also uses this quote, "And in the cosmos there is no void, but it is a united whole (Diogenes Laertius viii 140=SVF 2.543)", to make it clear that the Stoics saw void as something that cannot be found within the cosmos (or the 'whole'). These passages also serve to outline the Stoic belief that void exists outside of the cosmos, while bodies fill up the entirety of the known world, making it place. Place has dimensions that are granted to it by the bodies that occupy it, while void has no shape (this will be further expanded upon in Todd's analysis of the differences between place and void). This is also supported by a passage written by Sextus Empiricus, where he writes, "The Stoic philosophers suppose that there is a difference between the 'whole' and 'all'. For they say that the world is whole, but the external void together with the world is all" (LS268.44A). It is worth noting that even though Sextus Empiricus is a source of knowledge on Stoic beliefs,

he writes about Stoicism through a critical lens, and therefore is not the most reliable source on Stoicism. This passage, however, is fairly straightforward. It offers further proof that the Stoics believed void to be external , a thing for the universe to expand into. But what makes it a 'thing'? It has no mass, it is both invisible and incorporeal, and it cannot be found within our universe. However, it is discussed by Stoics on the same level as things such as time and place, both of which are very present in our world. All of these things fall under the title of 'incorporeal', along with sayables (lekta). Like void, they do not exist, as they are not bodies (LS162.27D). Therefore, they do not fall into the Stoic category of the 'existence' but are still included in the category of 'subsistence'. Another way of saying this is that they are not 'bodies', but they are still 'something'. Given this distinction, the Stoics consider something to be the highest genus of reality, as it truly encompasses everything both inside and outside of our universe (de Harven, pg. 406). Furthermore, in Todd's paper, he quotes Cleomedes, saying, "Just as there is something which receives body, so also there is that which is capable of receiving body. That which is capable of being occupied and vacated by body is void" (pg. 129, Section 1). This passage clearly states that there is something capable of receiving body, and that that something is void.

Todd claims that Stoic void is simply something that can be conceived of, as it does not follow any of the criteria required for existence. He focuses on the differences between place and void, stating that place is space that is actively being occupied by a body while void is space that is capable of being occupied but is at that moment unoccupied. An important distinction between the two is that place has dimensions, while void does not. Place's dimensions, however, are determined by the body that is occupying it. Shape is a quality that is intrinsic to bodies, which they then carry with them into whatever space they are currently occupying (pg. 129). Another key difference between place and void is that place is limited by what is actually occupied by a body. Void, on the other hand, has no limits. If it did, then it would have to have a shape of some sort. However, there was some debate over whether or not void could possibly be infinite. Cleomedes writes of a Peripatetic criticism on the concept of infinite void, where it is argued that in order for there to be infinite void, there must be infinite body. In response, Todd explains Cleomedes' argument that body cannot be bound by void, or vice versa. This is due to the principle that states that boundaries differ from the thing that they bound. This would create an infinite cycle of body being bound by void, and then in turn void being bound by body, only to be followed by body being bound by void again. This paradox proves that it is possible for void to exist outside of the boundaries that limit bodies (pg.132).

While de Harven agrees with Todd that void is infinite and differs from place, she argues that it is more similar to place than Todd believes. She claims that the only difference between the two is that void is something that can be occupied but is not, while place is something that can be occupied and is. And in order for void to be able to be occupied, it must first be Something. As evidence for this, de Harven cites Cleomedes' writings on void where he discusses how, by necessity, there must be a certain substance to void. He claims that void does not have to be tangible, not have a shape, etc. It simply must be capable of receiving a body (pg. 408, Section E).

De Harven also offers a body-based argument against Todd's claim that void is simply something that can be conceived of. She argues that in a world where bodies are paramount, it is unrealistic to claim that void cannot exist without bodies while also reducing void to a possible entity. For how can one claim that bodies are necessary in order to have void when void is merely a concept that is far removed from a body? She cites Todd in discussing the belief that void is a 'possibilium'(or model entity; something that can only be conceived of), which is accurate to his article (pg. 409). To de Harven, it makes sense that void depends on bodies because void is an incorporeal, and therefore it subsists . While subsisting is not the same as existing, it is closer to existence than simply being a possibilium. De Harven compares void's dependence on bodies to traffic being dependent on the existence of cars. This analogy also works when establishing that void is a proper object of thought, another aspect that makes it more likely to subsist. The Stoics considered proper thought to be any thought that is available to any person, should they choose to think it. It was their belief that any proper object of thought had to be something , which decreases the likelihood of them viewing any incorporeal (including void) as merely a possibilium (de Harven, pg. 413). All incorporeals are proper objects of thought. Another way of saying this is that they are real in a derivative way, meaning that souls can be impressed in relation to them. Going back to the idea that none of them can be something without the existence of bodies, both de Harven and Todd agree that this is the case. But de Harven offers yet another example of this, one that she borrows from Sextus Empiricus. She discusses how a drill sergeant may demonstrate a drill from a distance, while a student copies the motions. In this case, it is the pattern of the drill sergeant's movements that is akin to the soul being impressed upon in relation to an incorporeal (pg. 113, Section J). The pattern cannot subsist without the drill sergeant to make the movements, just like void (along with the other incorporeals) cannot subsist without bodies.

While both Todd and de Harven do an admirable job of analyzing source texts on Stoic void, de Harven's analysis aligns more closely with Stoic beliefs. The biggest proof of this is her discussion on incorporeals. While she uses the Stoic concept of incorporeals to support her stance on void's status as something that subsists, Todd fails to mention any of the other incorporeals except place. He also chooses to leave out any explanation of what incorporeals are, or how they relate to Stoic physics. Had he chosen to mention them, he would have had to defend his position that void is simply a possibilum, while also arguing that place is something more veridical. This would have been difficult to do, since the Stoics put them into the same category; incorporeals. They did not draw any distinctions between which one was more 'real', simply stating that anything that is something but not a body is an incorporeal. If Todd wished to be firm on his stance on the status of void, he supposedly could have done so by attempting to reduce all incorporeals to things that can be conceived of. But if something can only be conceived of, then the soul would not be able to be impressed upon in relation to that thing. For how can a mere possibilium have any sort of effect on the soul? One only needs to look to time to see that this argument would not have gone very far. For it is clear how time affects all bodies, even if it does not do so directly. Similarly to the drill sergeant, time does not physically make people older. However, our bodies follow the pattern of time, and our souls are impressed upon in relation to it.

De Harven, on the other hand, uses the Stoic concept of incorporeals to strengthen her argument for void as something that subsists. By drawing similarities between place and void, she highlights the fact that they are in the same category and should therefore be given similar characteristics (pg.419). In fact, she could have gone even further and dived deeper into the other incorporeals to further explain how the Stoics saw the relationship between void and bodies. For example, without bodies, there would be no one to speak sayables into existence. Similarly, if there was nothing to be affected by time, then time would have no need to subsist. Furthermore, place has been defined as 'that which is occupied by a body', and therefore would also not be able to exist without the existence of bodies. Void, like these needs body because it is that which is able to be occupied by a body. It has already been proven that void is not limited by the dimensions of body like place is, but there still must be body in existence in order for void to subsist. Think of what would happen if there were no universe, no bodies, nothing in existence at all. There would be no need for void, as there would be no bodies to expand into it at any point.

De Harven writes, "Place and void lack body but not extension and are thus physical but not corporeal" (pg. 420). In establishing this, she discusses how place is limited both by

the body that is occupying it (from the inside-out) and by the bodies that limit how much body can occupy it (from the outside-in). She uses the example of a parking space being defined by both the car that is inside it and the cars that are in the surrounding spaces (pg. 419-420). In a similar way, void is limited by the universe. This may not seem to be possible, since void has no dimensions and is not limited by any occupying bodies. But the Stoics are clear about there being no void inside of the world, placing a firm limitation on void (that it must be outside of the universe). This makes the cosmos the center of void, as void must extend outwards from it (pg. 421). Giving void this limitation further likens it to place and illustrates it as something physical. For how can nothing have limitations? Or, to address Todd's claim, how can something that is only a thing that can be conceived of have limitations? By contrast, de Harven's assertion that void is a physical incorporeal fits neatly in with this line of reasoning. Void is not something with shape, but something surrounding shape.

Given the proof analyzed in this essay, it is clear that while void still does not meet the criteria for existence, it has earned its place subsisting alongside the other Stoic incorporeals. Although Todd had reasonable points about the infinite nature of void, his overall characterization of void as a mere possibilium is flawed. De Harven, on the other hand, gives void its due credit as something that subsists outside of the universe, while also depending on the existence of the world (or more specifically, the bodies within it) to be something. Her analysis was further expanded upon using the other three Stoic incorporeals (place, time, and lekta), with the closest comparison being drawn to place as it is the most fundamentally similar to void. Thanks primarily to writings by Cleomedes and Sextus Empiricus, we are able to understand a good deal about how the Stoics saw void, and de Harven's analysis holds true to the source material.

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ART BY KYRA WOLFENBARGER

ARTIST STATEMENT

KYRA WOLFENBARGER

Kyra "Wolf" Wolfenbarger (b. 2003) lives and works in Seattle, Washington. Born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada, Wolf is expected to graduate with a BFA with Honors from the University of Washington in Spring 2025. Recent group exhibition venues include the Jacob Lawrence Gallery and an art research symposium at the Henry Art Gallery. A selected award includes the Mary Gates Research Scholarship for Wolf's ethnographic research in Black family archives through visual art.

Wolf's work explores imaginative collaborative storytelling as a viable method of producing knowledge. This collaborative storytelling emerges in a plethora of ways, recently occurring as visual elaborations upon ethnographic interviews surrounding Wolf's Black family histories, an artistic response to a colleague's exploration of the Black experience through birdsong and the blues, and ongoing artistic conversations with poetry by a writer in Chicago on fear/longing/memory. Many of Wolf's artworks use personal and external experiences and scholarship to research Black American practices of radical imagination as a weapon against sustained racial subjugation. Wolf also uses explorations of material and medium to physically explore the concept of the "irrational" within the human psyche, recently keying in on issues of moral scrupulosity in an era of constant ethical surveillance. Whether through explorations of Black matriarchy, family archives, or moral perfectionism, many of Wolf's works challenge what we deem "satisfactory" knowledge about our interiority and exteriority, and invite the viewer to become a collaborator in imagining beyond preconceptions.

Find more of Wolf's work on Instagram @wolfthestoryteller.

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