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Race and Evaluation of Philosophical Skill: A Virtue Theoretical Explanation of Why People of  
Color Are So Absent From Philosophy

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## Introduction

It is no secret that philosophy as a discipline fares quite poorly in terms of the range of identities that compose its members (Alcoff 1999; Allen et al. 2008; Bell 2002; Cherry and Schwitzgebel 2016; Dicey Jennings et al. 2019; Eric Schwitzgebel and Carolyn Dicey Jennings 2017; Haslanger, Sally 2008; Sophia Belle 2011; Superson 2002). Some hypothesize that this lack of diversity is the result of a series of bottlenecks that professional philosophers pass through (Botts et al. 2014; Dicey Jennings et al. 2019; Schwitzgebel, Eric 2017; 2019). These bottlenecks separate undergraduate philosophy majors from graduate philosophy and graduate philosophy students from permanent or tenure-track jobs in philosophy departments.

These bottlenecks depress philosophy's racial diversity at least partly, if not largely, through the methods, processes and habits that constitute how philosophy Ph.D. admissions committees and philosophy faculty search-committees evaluate applicants. Although, graduate school itself can act as bottleneck. For example, Black women are underrepresented as tenured philosophers given the number of Black women who are accepted into Ph.D. programs (Botts et al. 2014; Dotson 2019). But some have suggested that the admissions bottleneck explains more than its share of professional philosophy's lack of diversity (Botts et al. 2014; Schwitzgebel, Eric 2017; 2019). For example, Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons compose a greater proportion of undergraduate philosophy majors than graduate students (Botts et al. 2014; Schwitzgebel, Eric 2017; 2019).

Admissions committees in philosophy Ph.D. programs across the English-speaking world admit applicants on the basis of materials such as writing samples and letters of recommendation. These committees' members assume that these materials provide insight into how an applicant will perform in a doctoral program in philosophy. This is seemingly a necessary assumption to assess applications. But at least some, if not most, committee members also assume that they can determine

that one applicant will likely manifest a higher degree of philosophical skill than another applicant on the basis of differences between their materials.

I challenge this assumption by explaining how applicants' materials in significant measure reflect the racially unjust environment in which they manifest their philosophical skill. I explain how applicants' racial-group membership in similar measure determines what these materials consist in.

In the course of challenging this assumption, I will make two theoretical contributions and one practical contribution to the philosophy literature. The first theoretical contribution I will make is to provide an outline of the consequences of racial injustice on Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants' capacity to manifest their underlying philosophical skill. The second theoretical contribution that I will make is to describe the factors that either (i) degrade admissions committee members' capacity to accurately evaluate applicants' underlying philosophical skill or (ii) depress the odds that admissions committee members understand applicants' situation and shape. A consequence of this is that I show that gatekeepers into the profession of philosophy are not sufficiently skilled in judging these applicants either (1) because these gatekeepers' often harbor explicit or implicit anti-Black-Indigenous or Latinx attitudes (2) because of the US society's racially unjust structure or (3) both.

A practical aim that I have is to recommend policies that philosophy departments and universities can implement to at least partly correct for Ph.D. admissions committee members' failure to account for how racial injustice relates to the philosophical performances enshrined in applicants' application materials. That is, I will recommend policies to constrain the effect of admissions committee members' white ignorance on the number of Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants admitted to philosophy Ph.D. programs.

To explain how racial injustice relates to applicants' philosophical skill, I will assume the following. First, I assume that an individual properly manifests her skill if she is in the proper

philosophical shape and she is properly philosophically situated (Sosa 2016; 2017). Second, I assume that philosophical skill is roughly equally distributed amongst races in the English-speaking world. Here philosophical skill is just one kind of skill which subjects can manifest such as basketball shooting skills, archery skills and tennis service returning skill.

I appeal to the notion of a subject's underlying skill. Two subjects have the same underlying skill at a point in time if they would perform the skill equally well if they are both equally situated and in equal shape. As a consequence, even if one subject has the same underlying skill as another subject, they will not equally manifest this skill if they differ either in terms of their relevant external condition or internal condition.

Now, the underlying skill that a subject has at a point in time will largely be a result of the social or environmental conditions in which this subject developed her skill. As a result, social conditions such as racial injustice can affect whether a subject successfully manifests a skill in at least two ways. The first way is that racial injustice affects a subject's situation or shape, synchronically, at a point in time such that she cannot manifest her skill. The second way is that racial injustice has affected a subject's development of her underlying skill through its diachronic effect on her environmental or internal conditions.

Two subjects who receive the same training in athletic, academic, or artistic fields can differ in their underlying skill because of either (i) how their social environment depressed or promoted their respective underlying skill's development over time or (ii) how their social environment depressed or promoted their respective underlying skill's manifestation at a point in time. So, two philosophy Ph.D. applicants can manifest differing levels of philosophical skill which are enshrined in their application materials even though they have the same underlying philosophical skill.

By philosophical *skill*, I refer to individuals' capacity to make arguments and persuade readers that their argument is plausible and their capacity to understand and to clearly explain other persons'

arguments. Invoking the notion of philosophical skill raises the questions of what should count as philosophical skill and how racial injustice affects individuals' judgements regarding what should *count* as philosophical skill. I do not address these questions. Here I take it (1) *that* racial injustice affects someone's judgement of an individual's philosophical skill to differ from (2) racial injustice's effect on what counts as philosophical skill among professional philosophers. The notion of philosophical skill that I do invoke involves the assumption that there is some objective level of philosophical skill that individuals enshrine in their application materials even if the level of skill enshrined is in significant measure a result of how racial injustice affects their philosophical situation and shape.

I take philosophical skill to involve not only components such as argumentative capacity and persuasive capacity, but also style of expression (Bayruns García 2019). Style of expression is a feature of philosophical skill that plays a role in how professional philosophers evaluate philosophical skill. A subject's style of expression involves features such as tone, cadence, pausing, speed, and corresponding gestures that she uses to convey information through speech (Gumperz 1982; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982). These evaluations are enshrined in the letters of recommendation that tenure-line faculty submit on behalf of applicants to philosophy Ph.D. programs.

Some have pointed out that widely held negative stereotypes of Black, Indigenous and Latinx persons can cause non-dominant-racial group members who use styles of expression associated with these racial groups to be taken as not credible or not as knowers (Bayruns García 2019; Crerar 2016; Dotson 2011; Fricker 2007; Mills 2007; Munroe 2016). As a consequence, the level of philosophical skill that a letter of recommendation writer conveys in his letter can depend on the expression style that an applicant uses in classes, seminars and general philosophical discussion. It can depend on this because recommenders will tend to evaluate dominant-racial-group-associated expression styles more highly than non-dominant-associated expression styles. So, at least in terms of this dimension of

philosophical skill, what counts as philosophical skill will depend on racial injustice's influence on recommenders through stereotypes. I invoke this relation to (1) note how deeply socially relative philosophical skill can be and (2) to narrow the scope of my argument and explanation to focus on features of philosophical skill that are enshrined in applicants' writing samples such as argumentative capacity.

I assume that the comparatively deep understanding of US society that Black, Indigenous and Latinx persons often have, as a result of their non-dominant social locations, or identities, often partly compose their philosophical skill. I assume that a Black, Indigenous or Latinx person's understanding of racial injustice in US society will put them in a comparatively better position to make arguments about racial injustice and also to persuade others that these arguments are plausible even though epistemic injustice phenomena such as testimonial quieting may depress the likelihood that they persuade dominant-group hearers (Dotson 2011). I assume that at least a minimal version of standpoint theory is true. I take a minimal view of standpoint to involve that non-dominant social locations, or identities, are positions from which one will more likely believe the truth regarding injustice in comparison to other social locations (Alcoff 1999; P. H. Collins 1990; Du Bois 1903; Harding 1993; Hartsock 1987; P. C. Taylor 2017). This view of standpoint is compatible with the ideas (1) that non-dominant-group members will sometimes inaccurately judge in the injustice-information domain and (2) that other identity features of non-dominant-group members such as their class membership or social status can explain why a non-dominant-group member errs in this information domain.

By philosophical *situation*, I refer to the situation that the majority of Black, Latinx and Indigenous people find themselves in. These situations involve educational systems that underserve people of color (Orr 2003; Vaught 2009), regimes of policing that menace and lead to the unjust deaths of Black and Latinx folks (Alang et al. 2017; Brunson and Miller 2006), a lack of access to social capital

(E. Anderson 2010), insufficient nutrition access (Chávez, Telleen, and Kim 2007; MacNell et al. 2017) and depressed wealth and income caused by private and public sector policies such as redlining (K.-Y. Taylor 2019). The idea is that the racially unjust structure of US society constitutes a comparatively poor situation from which Black, Indigenous and Latinx persons manifest their philosophical skill. Thus, US society can be understood as a comparatively poor *philosophical* situation for people of color.

By philosophical *shape*, I refer to the internal condition that the majority of Black, Latinx and Indigenous people find themselves in. These kinds of shape involve poor physical and mental health states or diagnoses (Brown, Hargrove, and Griffith 2015; J. C. Collins and Rocco 2014), underdeveloped habits and skills that allow for clear expression of ideas such as writing in the active voice and self-confidence in one's intellectual abilities (Fricker 2007), negative physiological states such as hunger (Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn 2011) and the corrosive effects on one's psyche due to persistent worrying about losing one's housing (Bentley, Baker, and Aitken 2019; Hatem et al. 2020). The idea is that Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons' internal conditions are poor relative to the aim of maximizing their philosophical performance, because of racial injustice.

I present two arguments regarding what a Ph.D. admissions committee member's proper evaluation of applicants of color relative to White applicants at least partly consists in. First, I argue that (C) proper assessment of applicants' philosophical skill must account for how racial injustice affects White applicants' situation and shape in comparison to non-Whites because (P) White applicants' shape and situation unfairly benefit from racial injustice. Second, I argue that (C\*) admissions committee members' proper evaluation of these applicants involves that they have understanding of how applicants relate to their materials rather than having mere knowledge of what level of philosophical skill is represented in their materials because (P\*) mere knowledge of an applicant's materials often only reflects how racial injustice affects an applicant's philosophical situation and shape. The notion here is that proper evaluation will involve selectors' understanding of

how racial injustice relates not only to applicants of color but also to White applicants' capacity to manifest their philosophical skill.

I also explain how racial injustice depresses the likelihood that admissions committee members not only understand applicants' materials but also accurately believe regarding these materials. To this end, I appeal to how racial injustice affects both the mental attitudes of admissions committee members and the structural features of the situations in which these evaluators attempt to accurately assess applicants' materials and thus their philosophical skill.

The explanation that I present focuses on how racial injustice negatively affects whether people of color can manifest their philosophical skill in ways similar to White persons rather than other reasons why people of color are so absent from philosophy. Other explanations might focus more on how epistemic injustice phenomena such as testimonial injustice, testimonial quieting, epistemic appropriation and White ignorance depress the number of people of color in philosophy (Davis 2018; Dotson 2011; Fricker 2007; Mills 2007). This paper's focus matters because it puts into view a specific set of policies and remedies that departments and university administrations can propose or mandate.

Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons who are working class or live below the poverty line are the primary target of explanation rather than middle-or-upper class folks of color. They are the target of explanation because racial injustice explains why more Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons are more impoverished in proportional and absolute terms than White persons (Brown 2016; Dannefer, Gilbert, and Han 2020; Gittleman and Wolff 2004; "Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity. State Health Facts," n.d.). As a result, racial injustice explains why so many Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants cannot manifest their philosophical skill in the comparatively good philosophical situation and good philosophical shape that White persons enjoy. Even though middle-class and upper-middle-class people of color do not comprise the primary target of explanation here, I take it that the long history

of racial injustice in the US also explains why middle-to-upper-middle class Black, Latinx and Indigenous folks also do not proportionately compose professional philosophy's ranks.

This explanation also implies that impoverished Whites face some structurally similar impediments to manifesting their philosophical skill. But in this article I focus on how clearly unjust phenomena such as the legacy of slavery in the US, colonialism in Latin America and Indigenous genocide in the Americas (Madley 2016; Todorov 1999; Woolford, Benvenuto, and Hinton 2014) affect both (1) Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants' capacity to manifest their philosophical skill and (2) admissions committee members' capacity to accurately evaluate this skill. This capacity of admissions committee members to accurately evaluate Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants' can be understood as a skill itself. If this capacity is so understood, then the account I present partly consists in an explanation of why admissions committee members tend to lack this skill of accurately evaluating Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants' philosophical skill. Even though I focus on skills that individual subjects have, I assume that the skills subjects have are a result of the environments they are in where in this case the relevant feature of the environment is racial injustice. A consequence of this assumption is (1) that I am pessimistic about remedies and policies that individual evaluators can implement, but (2) I am optimistic about remedies and policies that societies, communities and institutions can implement.

### Section 1: Situation, Shape and Racial Injustice

Suppose that an archer, Juana, just misses a target's bullseye and that William hits the same target's bullseye dead center. To properly evaluate these shots one must take into account not only where these arrows land in terms of the target, but one must evaluate Juana and William's respective situation and shape. If an evaluator ignores that Juana took her shot from a much further distance than William, then this evaluator improperly evaluates her shot relative to William's shot because that she attempted her shot further from the target makes her shot more difficult than William's. Similarly,

if an evaluator ignores that Juana had a cold and William did not, then this evaluator improperly evaluates her shot relative to William's because that she attempted her shot while ill makes her shot more difficult than William's. So, if one only takes into account where Juana and William's arrows land in terms of the target, then one neglects important features of their respective performances because these performance features at least partly indicate how skillful Juana and William's respective shots were.

According to Ernest Sosa, an individual's successful performance of a task manifests her first-order competence if she is in the proper shape and proper situation to exercise the relevant skill (Sosa 2010; 2017). If I can reliably sink basketball shots from the free-throw line on a basketball court, then I manifest my first-order competence to sink free throw shots because I have the relevant underlying skill in my nervous system, I am situated at a spot on the court from which I can reliably sink shots and I am in the proper physical shape to reliably get the ball in the hoop. The idea is that if an individual satisfies these skill, situation and shape conditions, then she will reliably enough accomplish her task.

According to Sosa, a subject manifests second-order competence if she succeeds not only because she meets the skill, shape and situation conditions but also because she performs knowing that she satisfies these conditions. The idea is that second order-competence involves that a successful performance is not only attributable to one's first-order competence but also to her knowledge that she meets the conditions to manifest this first-order competence (Sosa 2010; 2017). For example, Michael Jordan was an extremely great basketball player not only because he reliably made difficult basketball shots but also because he *knew* from where on the court he would reliably sink shots and because he knew he would reliably sink shots even while ill with fever. To act with full competence not only involves succeeding because of a reliable ability but also involves acting because one knows one will likely succeed. Part of what made Jordan so skilled and thus great is that he knew that he

could successfully perform in poor shape conditions, such as illness and fatigue, in which less skilled players could not successfully perform.

I invoke this notion of second-order competence because I will not only analyze applicants' philosophical skill but I will also consider admissions committee members' epistemic skill vis-à-vis their capacity to accurately believe regarding Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants' philosophical skill. I submit that racial injustice depresses the likelihood that an admissions committee member will accurately believe when it comes to Juana's philosophical skill where understanding how racial injustice depresses this likelihood involves understanding second-order competence.

On this view of performance, an individual's degree of skill covaries with the range of situations and shape in which she can successfully perform a task. A very skilled archer can hit a bullseye in situations that include high wind and significant fog and in kinds of shape that include being tired and injured. A skilled driver can maintain high speed in situations that include wet and winding roads and in kinds of shape that include fatigue. A reason why we evaluate archers and drivers in particular and performers in general as skilled is that they can successfully perform a task across a wide enough range of situation-and-shape scenarios (Sosa 2010; 2017). Here proper evaluation of an individual's skill must involve assessment of the shape and situation in which they performed the task. It must involve assessment of situation and shape because determining how skilled someone is involves *understanding* the difficulty of the performance which in turns involves *knowledge* of the conditions in which they performed the task. For example, evaluating only where an arrow lands on a target tells one little about how difficult the shot was and thus little about the archer's underlying skill.

Now, suppose that Juana and William are applicants for a philosophy Ph.D. program rather than archers and that their materials such as writing samples are akin to arrows that have landed on a target. And suppose that Juana is an Afro-Latinx-philosophy undergraduate from an inner-city Black

and Latinx neighborhood and that William is a Euro-White American-man-philosophy undergraduate from a thoroughly upper-middle-class-American community.

Suppose the following about Juana. Her primary and secondary education consisted in attending inner-city schools that underserved her in terms of the quality and quantity of resources available to her. Her neighborhood was plagued by crime, public drug use, police brutality and profiling and lack of access to nutrition and exercise. Juana attends a public university in the inner-city while both working 40-50 hours a week and living at home with her single mother and siblings in a one-bedroom apartment. Despite this, she completes a philosophy BA with excellent marks and is encouraged to apply for Ph.D. programs in philosophy. Juana's Ph.D. application materials are partly a result of the time and energy that she can spare in light of her work obligations and the feedback she receives from interested but overworked faculty.

Suppose the following about William. His primary and secondary education consisted in attending upper-middle-class schools that afforded him an abundance of high-quality resources. His neighborhood benefited from not only an absence of crime, public drug use, police brutality and profiling but also conspicuous sources of nutrition and venues for exercise. William attends a private university away from his hometown with enough funding from his parents so that he concentrates entirely on finishing his philosophy BA. He finishes with the highest distinction. He is similarly encouraged to apply for Ph.D. programs in philosophy. William's application materials are a result of almost all his time and energy and several rounds of feedback that he receives from faculty who devote considerable time and thought to his materials.

Now suppose that the philosophy Ph.D. program admissions committee at Virtuous University aims to properly evaluate their applicants in terms of their underlying skill. And suppose that they aim to evaluate applicants in terms of their underlying philosophical skill because succeeding in graduate school and professional philosophy requires some minimal level of philosophical skill.

I submit that proper evaluation of Juana and William's materials must involve assessment of the philosophical shape and situation in which they produced their materials where these materials constitute a philosophical performance. It must involve this because if these admissions committee members evaluate these applicants' materials apart from the shape and situation in which they were produced, then they will not have a sense of how difficult these respective performances were and thus they will not have a sense of evaluatively-relevant aspects of these philosophical performances. For example, if William's materials are more polished and his writing sample's thesis more rigorously defended than Juana's, then evaluation of Juana's materials apart from their production conditions will leave the evaluator without the accurate impression that Juana's underlying philosophical skill equals William's underlying skill.

If admissions committee members do *take into account* how William and Juana differ in terms of their philosophical shape and situation, then they will account for how racial injustice affects the degree to which Juana can manifest her underlying philosophical skill in comparison to William.

Racial injustice explains why Juana is in a comparatively poorer philosophical situation and poorer philosophical shape. Racial injustice explains this because racial injustice explains why on average Black, Indigenous and Latinx folks live in communities with fewer resources and opportunities than Whites and why they suffer from all manner of stressor and illness in higher degree than Whites (Alang et al. 2017; Alcoff 2015; E. Anderson 2010; Brunson and Miller 2006; Chávez, Telleen, and Kim 2007; MacNell et al. 2017; Mills 1997; Omi and Winant 1994; Orr 2003; K.-Y. Taylor 2019; P. C. Taylor 2013; Vaught 2009).

Juana's philosophical shape is poorer in comparison to William's. Juana's shape is poorer because she produced her materials while working 40-50 hours a week at public university with comparatively less faculty support and while living in a cramped one-bedroom apartment with her parents and siblings. I assume that manifesting one's philosophical skill is much more difficult in these

conditions than in William's situation which consists in a dormitory or a library at a private university. Juana's external condition is less conducive to manifest her underlying philosophical skill than William's external condition because of racial injustice.

Juana is in poorer philosophical shape in comparison to William not only because she is fatigued due to working 40-50 hours, stressed due to the lack of safety in her neighborhood and under the pressure of trying to make financial ends meet, but also because the primary and secondary educational systems in her community underserved her in terms of helping her develop finer grained writing habits such as writing in the active voice rather than the passive voice (Follett & Wensberg, 1998) and preferring Teuton inspired English lexicon over Norman-Latin inspired English lexicon (Bennett and Gorovitz 1997). Juana's internal condition is less conducive to her manifesting her underlying philosophical skill than William's because of racial injustice.

If proper evaluation of Juana and William's philosophical skill involves *considering* the philosophical shape and situation in which they performed this skill and considering their philosophical shape and situation involves attending to how racial injustice affects their respective shape and situation, then proper evaluation of their respective philosophical skill involves attending to how racial injustice affects their shape and situation. Evaluation of materials alone does not suffice for proper evaluation.

In explaining how admissions committee members tend to errantly judge Black, Latinx and Indigenous folks in terms of their philosophical performance, I appeal to a view of the normativity of performance in general and belief as a kind of performance in particular (Sosa 2010). Among these virtue epistemological views (Greco 2010; Pritchard, Haddock, and Millar 2010; Sosa 2010), I mainly appeal to Ernest Sosa's competence virtue epistemological view of beliefs because his view is one of the most prominent views in the literature and because his view usefully specifies what proper

performance consists in. His view allows for an analysis of the success conditions of both philosophical performance and evaluation of these performances.

## Section 2: Underlying Skill and Manifesting Skill

This discussion of evaluating philosophical skill raises the issue of whether a subject's skill is primarily a result of either innate talent or practice. In the literature on skill and talent, some argue that musical, scientific and analytical skills are largely the result of innate genetic inheritance (Detterman 1993; Eysenck and Barrett 1993; H Gardner 1993; Howard Gardner 2004; Heller 2007). On the other hand, some defend the view that factors other than innate talent result in highly developed skills such as practice over time, features of cultures and social environments (Crawford, Snyder, and Adelson 2020; Ericsson 2004; Howe, Davidson, and Sloboda 1998; Lafferty, Phillipson, and Costello 2020; Marcus 2012; Reutlinger et al. 2020). On the view of skill that I assume, that a subject practices her skill over time will primarily explain this skill's increase. For example, a tennis player can develop her skill to return serves by beginning with easier serves and then slowly increase the difficulty of the serves she attempts to return until she can return more difficult serves. Two tennis players may differ in terms of how quickly they can increase the difficulty of service shots that they can return. But they may differ in this respect because one player is more motivated to improve or because one player has inherited a gene that corresponds with quicker than average muscle twitch responses. Motivation can depend on the influence of a player's social environment. But even a player's genetic inheritance of a faster-than-average-muscle-twitch response can depend on whether she receives nutrition and whether she has been in scenarios to recognize and develop this genetic inheritance.

Suppose that Juderkis and Marisol practice their tennis service returns in equal amounts over the same period of time. But Juderkis' skill in returning service shots improves more quickly than Marisol's over this time period. On the picture of underlying skill that I have painted so far, Juderkis'

superior manifestation of her service return in comparison to Marisol's can be explained by factors such as Juderkis' greater motivation to improve this skill, Juderkis' more reliable access to good nutrition, Juderkis' more stable housing situation or Juderkis' faster-than-average-muscle-twitch response. That Juderkis and Marisol have the same underlying skill is compatible with these factors explaining why they differ in terms of how rapidly they improve their return-service skill. Alternatively, Juderkis and Marisol could differ on this score because they differ in their underlying skill. But, reasons to favor explanations that appeal to differences in social environments rather than difference in underlying skill are (1) that differences in social environments that bear on skill development abound and (2) that differences between human beings are most often due differences between environments (Bateson 2015; Pigliucci 2001). A basic assumption I make here is that social factors such as social economic status and racial group membership explain the overwhelming share of both an individual's underlying skill at a moment in time and the degree of skill a subject can successfully manifest at a moment. I assume this on the basis of robust findings in the social sciences that suggest this (Bradley and Corwyn 2002; Ferguson et al. 2013; Okado, Bierman, and Welsh 2013; Toldson et al. 2015).

In terms of philosophical skill, I assume that the bulk of reasons that explain a person's philosophical skill at any point in time will largely be social-structural or environmental reasons. But even if social features of a society and a person's environment explain what their underlying skill is at a moment in time, there is still some underlying capacity that they have at that time. On the picture of skill manifestation that I have painted, how this skill manifests will depend on external features of a subject's social environment such as poor housing and police harassment and internal features of her conscious and unconscious mental life such as suffering depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. So, the level of underlying philosophical skill that an Afro-Latinx person such as Juana could

exhibit at any moment will be a result of the historical and occurrent interaction of features of her environment with her internal mental features.

One might object that Juana's materials exhibit her resilience in the face of social obstacles rather than her philosophical skill. According to this objection, if philosophical skill can consist in the capacity to persuade through one's writing sample and Juana's writing sample is less persuasive than William's, then Juana is less philosophically skilled than William. Juana is best understood to exhibit resilience rather than skill.

This objection fails because Juana's materials are less persuasive than William's at least partly because he enjoys conditions that allow him to more fully manifest his underlying philosophical skill than Juana. This objection confuses the *manifestation* of philosophical skill with *underlying* skill. Two tennis players can have an equal underlying service return skill. But if one player's tennis skill manifestation conditions consist in 10-year-old tennis shoes with no tread, the other player's conditions consist in brand new shoes with brand new tread and the former player more successfully returns difficult shots, then I would improperly identify their skill as different based on their different performances. Mutatis mutandis in the case of Juana and William.

So far I have invoked the idea that a subject has a certain level of *underlying* skill that her environment determines to some degree. But there is a closely related notion of *potential skill*. A subject's potential skill is a skill that she would have if it was developed. This notion is closely related because both underlying skill and potential skill can be largely determined by a subject's environment. For example, many of the members of Juana's high school cohort may have potential skill equal to her current underlying skill where their underlying skill would have been equal had their social-environmental conditions differed. Even though these notions are closely related, they differ in terms of how environmental conditions relate to skill manifestation.

On the one hand, a subject's environmental conditions relate to her underlying skill synchronically. These conditions can relate to her skill synchronically because these conditions either enable or disable her capacity to manifest this skill at her current time slice or point in time. On the other hand, a subject's environmental conditions can relate to her underlying skill diachronically. These conditions can relate to her underlying skill diachronically because these conditions either enable or disable her capacity to manifest a skill at some point in the future. And there is a level of skill that a subject could manifest if her future social-environmental conditions are appropriately enabling. This level of skill a subject would manifest in such a future is what I call her potential skill. I will largely trade on the notion of underlying skill because admissions committees largely care to admit students on the basis of some skill that they can presently manifest or at some in the near future.

### Section 3: Evaluators, Understanding and Racial Injustice

In this section, I argue that admissions committee members properly 'take into account' or 'consider' applicants' philosophical situation and shape if they *understand* how applicants' materials relate to the philosophical situation and shape in which they produced these materials rather than merely having knowledge of the philosophical performance enshrined in their materials. I explain the conditions admissions committee members must satisfy to count as understanding how applicants' situation and shape relates to their materials on a virtue epistemological account of knowledge and understanding. And I now appeal to understanding to illuminate how phenomena described in the epistemic injustice and epistemology of ignorance literature such as testimonial injustice and testimonial quieting can negatively affect admissions committee members' cognitive grasp of applicants' philosophical skill (Alcoff 2007; L. Anderson 2017; Bayrún García 2019; 2020; Davis 2016; 2018; Dotson 2011; Fricker 2007; Martín In press; Mills 2007; Pohlhaus, Jr 2012; Saul 2018; Woerner 2019).

For many epistemologists, understanding involves some “extra” or “further” cognitive feature beyond what knowing involves. Understanding can involve grasping the relations between ideas and concepts regarding a target of understanding (Elgin 2007; 2009), grasping explanatory relations and how things cohere in the domain of understanding (Kvanvig 2003) and awareness of how the internal bits of the target of understanding relate to each other (Riggs 2003). A view that cuts across these and many views of understanding is that “understanding is directed at a complex of some kind...with parts that depend upon, and relate to, one another” which a subject “grasps or apprehends when [she] understands” (Grimm 2012, 105). So, understanding seemingly involves some something beyond what most epistemologists have taken knowledge to involve.

I submit that admissions committee members properly take into account how applicants’ situation and shape relate to their materials if they *understand* this relation. They properly take this into account if they understand this relation because understanding this involves grasping relations between applicants’ shape and situation and the philosophical performance enshrined in their materials. Understanding these explanatory relations puts evaluators in a position to more accurately judge an applicant’s underlying philosophical skill because this evaluator grasps how Juana’s shape and situation explain the features of her writing sample. As a result this evaluator would grasp how racial injustice explains why Juana differs from William according to some philosophical skill metric.

Mere knowledge of applicants’ materials will not suffice for an admissions committee member to count as properly taking into account Juana’s philosophical situation and shape because this committee member will merely satisfy conditions on which he is properly evaluated as knowing a fact set (Chisholm 1989; Goldman 1967). Such conditions can obtain without a subject having a sense of how concepts such as racial injustice relate to Juana’s comparative lack of time to work on her materials. Here a lack of time at least partly constitutes her poor situation. Understanding involves a grasping of how concepts and facts relate or explanatory relations that a subject who knows can lack.

So, admissions committee members who have knowledge of applicants' materials do not count as properly taking into account their situation and shape because these committee members can be evaluated as knowing the relevant fact set without awareness of applicants' situation and shape.

On the other hand, admissions committee members who have understanding of these materials count as properly taking into account applicants' situation and shape because these committee members cannot be evaluated as understanding these materials without awareness of their situation and shape.

A further objection that someone could lodge is that admissions committee members cannot know that they accurately represent whether Juana's material compare to William's as they do because of a lack of underlying philosophical skill or rather because her philosophical-skill manifestation conditions are poor relative to William's. There seems no way for such a committee member to know or represent with confidence whether the skill Juana enshrines in her materials are a consequence of insufficient underlying skill or the conditions in which she manifests them.

Even though I concede that an admissions committee member cannot *know* or represent with a high degree of confidence what explains the level of skill displayed in Juana's materials, admissions committee members can represent with a high degree of confidence that Juana's conditions *likely* undermined her philosophical shape and situation in comparison to William. They can do so because Afro-Latinas who live and were educated in inner-city neighborhoods *tend* to have poor philosophical manifestation conditions even if this does not obtain for all Afro-Latinas similarly situated. So, admissions committee members need not know anything about any particular applicants' skill because they need only know that these regularities hold for White applicants on the one hand and Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants on the other hand.

A response to this is that admissions committees aim to admit individual students on the basis of the philosophical skill enshrined in their materials rather than statistical generalities true of Black,

Latinx and Indigenous applicants. This response fails to take into account that if the analysis that I present about how racial injustice relates to committee member judgement is roughly accurate, then committee members have long admitted many White applicants whose materials misrepresent their philosophical skill as more robust than it actually is. White applicants' materials have benefited not only from skill manifestation conditions that are comparatively better due to racial injustice but also from inflated credibility assessments due to the positive stereotypes that White applicants enjoy (Fricker 2007; Medina 2013).

#### Section 4: How Racial Injustice Undermines Evaluation Accuracy

I now explain how racial injustice depresses the likelihood that an admissions committee member achieves understanding of applicants' materials. To this end, I consider that this lack of understanding is a result of how racial injustice simultaneously causes both Whites to tend to err in the racial-injustice information domain and Black, Indigenous and Latinx folks to tend to accurately believe in the racial-injustice-information domain.

According to some virtue epistemologists, if someone knows or understands, then they have successfully believed where this success is creditable to a subject's reliable ability to accurately believe rather than luck (Greco 2010; Pritchard, Haddock, and Millar 2010; Sosa 2017). On this view, if someone accurately represents how the world is and this representation is accurate because of her skill rather than luck, then she is properly evaluated as knowing or understanding where knowing and understanding are a kind of achievement.

According to Sosa (2017), belief is a kind of action that aims at truth and knowledge is successful belief whose success is due to a subject's competence rather than luck. On this view, I know if I accurately believe because of my reliable ability to accurately believe. My ability to believe is reliable if while in the proper epistemic situation and proper epistemic shape I often enough accurately believe because of my epistemic skill. A situation is epistemically bad if it depresses the likelihood that a

subject will believe accurately. Foggy and unclear conditions are examples of this. Someone is in epistemically bad shape if her internal state or condition depresses the likelihood that she accurately believes. Examples of this are hallucinatory states or extreme fatigue. Epistemic situation and shape correspond to the external and internal success conditions for exercising one's epistemic skill such that she accurately believes.

Someone can be evaluated as either knowing or knowing full well (Sosa 2010). Someone can be evaluated as knowing even though they are not aware that they accurately believe due to their competence rather than luck. A subject should be evaluated as knowing *full well* if she accurately believes because of her competence rather than luck *and* she believes because of her awareness that she would likely succeed in her epistemic shape and epistemic situation. The idea is that an individual counts as knowing full well only if she is aware that believing in her situation and shape will likely result in a true belief.

Suppose the level of philosophical skill that Juana displays in her materials can be represented by a score of 7 out of 10 where higher scores indicate more philosophical skill than lower scores. Suppose that William's score is a 9. And suppose that proper evaluation of materials at least involves accurately assessing this score even though this score alone does not fully represent one's philosophical skill because one cannot accurately assess this apart from considering Juana's situation and shape. But at the very least, proper evaluation will involve accurately assessing features of Juana's materials such as clarity of prose and rigor of argument. Proper evaluation will involve this because if an evaluator assesses these features incorrectly and as a result takes her score to be, say, 5 out of 10, then Juana will be at a deficit apart from an evaluator's lack of consideration of her philosophical situation and shape.

Racial injustice elevates the likelihood that an admissions committee member will inaccurately perceive Juana's materials in terms of her philosophical-skill score because of how racial injustice

affects the mental attitudes that US society members, especially dominant-racial group members, harbor towards non-dominant racial group members. Dominant-racial group members will tend to harbor explicit or implicit prejudices against non-dominant group members such as Black, Indigenous and Latinx persons.

On a virtue epistemological view of knowledge, that an admissions committee member harbors such prejudices constitutes bad epistemic shape in which to successfully believe regarding their materials because these prejudices can result in committee members taking, say, Juana as less credible than she actually is (Fricker 2007), not taking her as a knower (Dotson 2011) or not taking her as capable of contributing to joint inquiry (Hookway 2010). A result of this is that admissions committee members will tend to inaccurately assess non-White applicants' materials in terms of the surface level of philosophical skill displayed in these materials. And this will elevate the likelihood that admissions committee members inaccurately assess these applicants' underlying philosophical skill. Here the surface the level of philosophical skill displayed in materials is relevant because it, combined with a student's manifestation conditions, signals what one's current level of underlying skill actually is.

If non-White applicants such as Juana are more likely than White applicants to take up philosophical issues involving race and racial injustice (Alcoff 2013; Dotson 2011; 2012; 2019) and White admissions committee members are either likely unfamiliar with these issues or do not take them as interestingly philosophical (Dotson 2011; 2012; Gordon 2019), then racial injustice negatively affects how admissions committee members are epistemically situated to assess, say, Juana's materials. Racial injustice explains both why admissions committee members are likely unfamiliar with philosophical issues of race and racial injustice and why many philosophers do not take these issues as philosophically interesting and thus are poorly epistemically situated. As a consequence admissions committee members will tend to inaccurately assess application materials that take up race and racial

injustice in terms of the level of philosophical skill they display. That admissions committee members are unlikely familiar with issues of race and racial injustice partly constitutes a poor philosophical situation for Black, Indigenous and Indigenous applicants because they will tend to work in these areas more than White applicants.

On the account that I present, Black, Indigenous and Latinx students will tend to suffer inaccurate evaluation because of racial injustice apart from their area of interest. While, Black, Indigenous and Latinx students who work on racial injustice-related issues will tend to suffer even poorer evaluations because that they work in these areas will act as a factor that further depresses the accuracy of admissions committee members' evaluations.

Racial injustice, white supremacy and anti-Black-Indigenous-and-Latinx racism causes primarily but not exclusively Whites not only to lack knowledge and understanding of racial injustice but also harbor false beliefs in this domain (Mills 2007). Charles Mills calls this white ignorance. Admissions committee members who instantiate white ignorance will not only take philosophical issues of race and racial injustice as philosophically uninteresting but also lack the knowledge of racial injustice to accurately assess the materials of applicants that take up race and racial injustice. That admissions committee members lack this knowledge puts Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants in a position where they cannot benefit from their deeper understanding of racial injustice than Whites. So, even if these applicants' materials involve excellent work on racial injustice, due at least partly to their social location or standpoint, evaluators of these materials will not be in an epistemic position to accurately judge them.

Philosophers have pointed out that power relations in a society affect what questions seem worth answering, what issues seem worth investigating or what counts as knowledge (Foucault et al. 2007; Lloyd 2005; Longino 1990; 2002). On this view of how power relates to theoretical and empirical investigation, a society will prove a more suitable environment to investigate some topics rather than

others. I assume that the degree to which racial injustice is woven into the fabric of a society will covary with the degree to which a subject will find it difficult to investigate racial injustice. This is well documented in terms of how poorly journalism as a field reports on racial injustice (Benson 2005; T. L. Dixon 2017; T. L. Dixon and Williams 2015; T. Dixon and Linz 2000; Everbach 2006; Johnston 2020; Sylvie 2011; Zeldes, Fico, and Diddi 2007). Professional philosophers and thus admissions committee members largely do not consider issues of race as philosophically interesting or even strictly speaking philosophical partly because they are products of a society that has largely not valued the investigation of white supremacy and racial injustice.

If that an applicant works on a topic she cares about promotes that she maximizes the degree to which she manifests her philosophical skill and applicants of color more often care about topics that involve race than White applicants, then Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants are comparatively poorly philosophically situated relative to White applicants. They are so situated because more applicants of color than Whites will find their work on topics that maximally motivate them undervalued and thus improperly evaluated by admissions committee members. But applicants of color who are interested in issues of race may also find themselves comparatively poorly philosophically situated because they will be less likely to find faculty who share their motivation to work on issues of race. Here I assume that more Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants will choose to work on issues of race, racial injustice and white supremacy than Whites.

I now explain why an admissions committee member's knowledge of Juana's materials, by itself, does not put her in a position to properly assess, say, her philosophical skill.

Suppose that an admissions committee member manages to have knowledge of the philosophical skill enshrined in Juana's materials. This admissions committee member has not achieved understanding of Juana's philosophical skill because he lacks a grasp of how her materials

relate to her situation and shape. As a consequence, this committee member has not properly taken into account her situation and shape and thus he has not properly evaluated her philosophical skill.

I will now explain how racial injustice depresses the likelihood that an admissions committee member *understands* Juana's philosophical performance enshrined in her materials. For most epistemologists, understanding involves either that a subject senses how facts relate to each other or that a subject knows why something is the case (Elgin 2007; Grimm 2012; Kvanvig 2003; Pritchard, Haddock, and Millar 2010; Riggs 2003; Zagzebski 2001). As a result, on these accounts, understanding involves that a subject is cognitively committed to at least two information bits that compose her understanding. And if proper evaluation of an applicants' philosophical skill involves that an evaluator's understanding is true, then an admissions committee member's proper evaluation of Juana's philosophical skill will involve understanding that is composed of two *true* information bits. So, if this understanding involves at least two information bits and racial injustice depresses the likelihood that an admissions committee member accurately believes about Juana's materials, about her philosophical situation and shape and facts about how racial injustice negatively affects her philosophical situation and shape, then racial injustice depresses the likelihood that he believes facts that this understanding requires.

There are a host of facts that this understanding involves such as that the legacy of slavery in the US continues to affect Black folks (Mills 1997; Omi and Winant 1994; P. C. Taylor 2013) that redlining practices by US banks prevented Black and Latinx folks from building intergenerational wealth in comparison to Whites (K.-Y. Taylor 2019), that Black, Latinx and Indigenous folks lack access to nutrition, housing and safety that Whites disproportionately enjoy (E. Anderson 2010; Brown 2016) and that Black and White folks do not have equal opportunity in the US job market (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004). Yet according to opinion poll and social science data, a majority of

Whites tend not to believe facts such as these (Doherty, Motel, and Weisel 2014; Jones 2016; Snyder et al. 2017).

The social psychology literature abounds with psychological dispositions and effects that explain why Whites as the dominant racial group in the US tend to hold false beliefs about racial injustice and also reject facts about racial injustice (Cohen 2003; Cohen, Aronson, and Steele 2000; Giner-Sorolila and Chaiken 1997; Kahan et al. 2007; Mandelbaum 2016; 2019; Nisbett and Ross 1980; Porot and Mandelbaum 2020; Quilty-Dunn and Mandelbaum 2018; Stanley 2015; Thibodeau and Aronson 1992). Despite this abundance of possible explanatory factors and effects, I submit that the human disposition to believe what feels good and not believe what feels bad performs more than its share of explanatory work in terms of why Whites errantly believe when it comes to racial injustice. This disposition when paired with Whites' domination of sources of information about racial injustice, I submit, explains why Whites get so much wrong when it comes to racial injustice.

This disposition on the part of Whites is an instance of a more general phenomenon where members of dominant-identity groups will tend to avoid believing the fact that they benefit from injustice or asymmetrical power relations. Other such identity groups are men, heterosexual persons, cis-gender persons, able bodied persons and upper-middle-class or wealthy persons. But this psychological defense mechanism vis-à-vis belief manifests itself in many non-political domains. One such domain is the sports domain. Fans of the New York Mets, for example, will tend to reject information that their team will lose more often than it wins in a given season because it feels much better to believe that one's preferred team will win than lose.

The mechanism at work is that Whites' positive self-conceptions will tend to involve false beliefs such as that 'they deserve what they have.' A result of this is that Whites will tend to reject information that is inconsistent with these false beliefs because if they accept this information, then they would have to accept the true belief that 'they do not deserve what they have.' Human beings

and thus Whites are disposed to believe what feels good and avoid believing what feels bad (Bendaña & Mandelbaum, 2020; Mandelbaum, 2018; Porot & Mandelbaum, 2020; Thibodeau & Aronson, 1992). Believing that one does not deserve what one has feels bad and believing that one deserves what one has feels good. So, Whites will tend to reject information that is inconsistent with their positive self-conception. And as a consequence admissions committee members will tend to reject true information that elevates the likelihood that they accurately evaluate Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons' philosophical skill because accurately evaluating them involves that they accept facts that are inconsistent with their positive self-conception.

If understanding a Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicant's philosophical performance involves cognitive commitment to facts that are inconsistent with the content of White subjects' positive self-conception and White subjects are psychologically disposed to reject such facts, then White subjects will tend to not understand this applicant's philosophical performance. Here that White subjects are disposed to maintain false beliefs such as "I deserve what I have" depresses the likelihood that admissions committee members understand the philosophical performance that Juana enshrines in her materials. This disposition results in this depressed likelihood because White admissions committee members will tend to reject facts required for understanding the performance enshrined in Juana's materials.

The picture I have presented so far is one where Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants will tend to suffer poor evaluation of their philosophical skill because of racial injustice's effect on both their skill manifestation conditions and on the conditions under which evaluators attempt to assess them. By my lights, Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants who work in any area of philosophy will tend to suffer this. But that such applicants work in areas that take up race and racial injustice will tend to result in even poorer evaluations because admissions committee members will tend not to take

these areas as proper philosophy in comparison to areas such as philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, epistemology and metaphysics.

### Section 5: Policies and Remedies

In this section, I will sketch four remedies that at least partly mitigate how racial injustice negatively affects admissions committee members' evaluations of Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants' philosophical skill.

The phenomenon that I have described so far involves philosophy admissions committee members inaccurately assessing Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants but I will focus on policies that admissions committees can implement. In many cases these policies may be suggested or mandated by departments or university administrations who aim to diversify their graduate student bodies. I focus on remedial policies that institutions or committees can implement rather than policies that individual evaluators can implement because the problem is structurally caused rather than individually caused. Here I trade on the notion that individuals' failure to accurately believe in the domain of race-and-racial injustice information is often not only a failure of an individual but also of the community, culture and society in which an individual lives (Bayruns García 2020; Fricker 2016; Medina 2013; Mills 2007). As a result, remedies and policies that aim to address this failure to believe will involve changes to the institutions and communities that compose an individual's society.

I submit that weighting more heavily applicants' files who have attended community colleges in inner-city communities of color in comparison to students who have not attended such colleges would at least partly offset the effect of admissions committee members' tendency to inaccurately assess applicants of color. Admissions committee members often score applicants in terms of the quality of their writing samples, the degree of praise in their letters of recommendation and an applicants' general fit in a program. I propose that committee members should add to the score attributed to applicants who have attended inner-city community colleges that serve communities of

color long underserved by the primary education system and whose student bodies are nearly entirely composed of Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons. Hostos Community College in the Bronx, New York and Los Angeles' Southwest College are examples of such colleges.

The idea that motivates this policy proposal is that if an admissions committee more heavily weights Black, Latinx and Indigenous students who have attended these community colleges, then they would elevate the likelihood that Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants with comparatively poor philosophical situation and shape gain entrance to its philosophy Ph.D. program. This policy would partly counteract admissions committee members' tendency to inaccurately assess these applicants. It would do so because the comparatively heavy weighting of these applicants' files will at least partly make up for the under weighting that, on my account, partly explains why people of color are so absent from professional philosophy.

This policy proposal aims to partly correct for committee members' inaccurate assessments of Black, Latinx and Indigenous persons who are working class or living below the poverty line. Focusing on this group of Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants has the merit of elevating the likelihood of admission of applicants whose philosophical situation and shape most acutely suffer from racial injustice.

I submit that a policy that would partly remedy improper assessments and thus promote diversity in professional philosophy is that philosophy departments should more heavily weight Black, Latinx and Indigenous applicants from inner-city Black and Latinx neighborhoods or in the case of Indigenous persons, Indigenous American reservations. As in the case of remedying admissions committee judgments of Ph.D. program applicants' philosophical skill, admissions committees could more heavily weight Black and Latinx students who have attended community colleges that serve these communities because of racial injustice's effect on their philosophical shape and situation.

A second policy proposal is to maximize how frequently Black, Indigenous and Latinx philosophy faculty of color and faculty from other underrepresented groups serve on admissions committees. These underrepresented faculty will not only be more motivated to identify these applicants' underlying philosophical skill but they will also be more sensitive to the importance of identifying it in comparison to the average White faculty member.

One might object that this would unjustly burden underrepresented faculty with diversifying the discipline of philosophy. One response to this objection is that this work can be made less burdensome by awarding such faculty who serve as admissions committee members more frequently than others course release credit or other forms of compensation.

A third policy is to provide committee members more time and resources to evaluate applicants' materials so that they can expend the appropriate amount of time and energy to identify applicants' underlying philosophical skill. One kind of resource is credit towards course release. It may just take much more time to appropriately examine applicants' materials if one aims to properly take into account the effect of an applicant's philosophical situation and shape on their materials. Here I assume that if a group of evaluators is given more time to evaluate materials and given instructions on how these materials relate to racial injustice, then the number of evaluators who understand this material will be elevated. This assumption is compatible with the idea in the understanding literature in epistemology that understanding is an achievement of the sort that is more valuable than knowledge (Pritchard, Haddock, and Millar 2010; Zagzebski 2009).

One might object that this is too costly a policy in terms of the monetary expense of awarding admissions committee members this suggested course release. A response to this is that if an institution values diversifying the discipline of philosophy and this expense can contribute to this diversification, then this expense may be warranted. A further response is that this expense is a result of the monetary value that accrued to White Americans due to centuries of de jure white supremacy

and de facto white supremacy since the voting and civil rights acts of the 1960s (Omi & Winant, 1994; Mills, 1997). So, ameliorating centuries of exploitation will require substantial monetary cost.

A fourth policy is that admissions committees should admit Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants who have enough underlying philosophical skill to succeed in the philosophy profession even though they have not fully manifested their philosophical skill because of their philosophical shape and situation. Admitting these applicants would involve commitment to provide these students with resources and support that would put them in improved philosophical shape and situation. These resources could include reduced teaching assistant or teaching responsibilities during graduate school, elevated stipends, elevated travel funds to present at conferences and faculty-and-advanced-graduate student mentors who would provide support and guidance.

One might object that it is unclear how committees can implement such a policy because these committee members may themselves manifest the very ignorance and biases that have been the focus of this paper. This objection fails because the proposed policy *depends on departments or administrative bodies* implementing such a policy with the aim of guiding committees' applicant-selection process.

The proposed policy does not depend on individual committee members identifying fine-grained levels of philosophical skill in Black, Indigenous and Latinx applicants. Here I assume (1) that the number of qualified applicants for admission often greatly outstrips the number of applicants that a committee can admit and (2) the sum of qualified applicants often includes applicants of color who committees will not admit.

An objector might still insist that if committee members cannot determine that Juana and William have the same underlying philosophical skill, then such a proposal seems inapt. I submit that this objector's insistence is based on an individualistic understanding of the issue. I assume that admissions committees have admitted many White applicants because of racial injustice's effect on committee members' assessment of them. That is, these committee members attributed more

philosophical skill to many White applicants than they actually had because of racial injustice. So, remedying the fact that many sufficiently skilled applicants of color have not been admitted may involve admitting some applicants of color who have less occurrent skill than a committee may prefer. But the view of skill that I have presented involves that a persons' philosophical skill is plastic and will likely increase with the correct support and environment.

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