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Response by the author

I am extremely grateful to Deborah Posel and Mike Cole for their comments and questions. As Posel notes so incisively, the concept of white tone developed in the book is an attempt to show how the South African schooling system desegregated, but not in a way that led to the de-whitening of privilege. Posel ends her remarks with an intriguing question: does the concept of 'white tone' offer an opportunity to revisit – or discard – 'white privilege' as an unnecessarily static and reified rendition of the life of whiteness?

I need to highlight some of *Race for Education*'s conceptual underpinnings to address this important question. As Posel indicates, white tone is influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power, a view that locates power not only in groups' economic assets but also in their cultural dispositions, which include language and accent. Bourdieu primarily studied how groups in relatively stable societies (such as France) maintained domination over time, but his analysis can be applied to class formation in countries undergoing significant change. Crucially, the framework allows us to partially separate *white people* (that is, those thought of as 'white') from broader *racial-cultural hierarchies*. The latter tend to benefit whites, but always in relation to other social differences including class and gender – and they can be the basis of social mobility for a black middle class in a postcolonial setting.

In more concrete terms, a reified notion of white privilege cannot explain South Africa's democratic transition – and, indeed, the same can be said about crude uses of the concept of whiteness. Adopting a static approach to race does not just miss what social scientists like to call 'nuance' but misreads the changing structure of society. Race is changing in dynamic ways, including through the rise of the black middle class, which has few options but to choose formerly white schools if its children are to avoid apartheid's worse schools.

There are, to be sure, examples of white tone at work that sit well with the language of white privilege. When black and white students graduate from the same primary school and white students are disproportionately admitted into their high schools of choice, this is a manifestation of white privilege. When black people do enter formerly white institutions, as the #RhodesMustFall protests showed, they might face discrimination because of language practices and Eurocentric curricula. But the *processes* at work and not just the *outcomes* are essential to grasp. Formerly white schools today fear that 'going black' will reduce their prestige among fee-paying white *and* middle-class black parents. Because of these logics, a poor white learner might be excluded from a desirable school, and a black rugby star might be given a large bursary. White tone is constantly mutating under these forces.

The fact that race remains so central to the everyday workings of schools and society at large detonates two views: that ending apartheid would automatically propel South Africa on a path to becoming non-racial; and the idea (sometimes circulating on the left) that race apartheid has given way to a kind of colour-blind class apartheid.

These points can be further illuminated by addressing one of Mike Cole's questions, which is whether there is a mood for socialism in the country. One way to address this is to ask to which schools radical socialist leaders send their children. To a great extent, comrades with the means have chosen formerly white schools. The African National Congress tinkered with but did not transform the marketized system established by the late-apartheid government in the early 1990s.

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This is because the National Party's downloading of responsibilities to schools gelled with the ANC's calls for 'people's education' and because a prospective black middle class had its children pencilled in to attend elite schools.

Cole also asks whether, after democracy, whites have moved into historically black spaces, such as township shebeens. On the whole, the answer is no. Desegregation has been a one-way street. Black people with the means have moved out of spaces designated for them by apartheid's racial engineers, but spaces built for those classified as African have remained overwhelmingly black.

That the ANC did not dramatically change South Africa's apartheid geography nor reconfigure hierarchies of prestige – certainly not in the way that Afrikaner nationalists did by promoting Afrikaans in the apartheid era – undergirds the continued power of white tone. There are certainly examples when whites have clung to power, but schooling allows us to see how most whites supported the desegregation process on certain conditions. Key to this was that white institutions would maintain their power and prestige and be accessible through money.

Finally, what I hope that an analysis of white tone does – and that neither white privilege nor a term such as 'class apartheid' can do – is to show the systemic processes that lead to *under*privilege. The great losers of South Africa's democratic transition are poor, especially rural, black South Africans, who often leave school not only with limited qualifications but also without the cultural dispositions valued in a society: for example, being able to speak acceptable English – that is, English with the 'right' (in certain respects 'white') accent.

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Rachel Spronk, *Ambiguous Pleasures: sexuality and middle class self-perceptions in Nairobi*. New York NY and Oxford: Berghahn Books (hb US$135/£99 – 978 0 85745 478 2; pb US$34.95/£27.95 – 978 1 78238 530 1). 2012/2014, xi + 310 pp.

In 2012, Rachel Spronk published her pathbreaking monograph *Ambiguous Pleasures*. Based on long-term fieldwork at the beginning of the 2000s and in-depth biographical interviews with twenty-four women and twenty-five men in their twenties living in Nairobi, Spronk explores in outstanding ethnographical detail and with exemplary analytic rigour the discourses and practices of sexuality and belonging of young urban professionals in Kenya's cosmopolitan capital. Since its first publication, the work has been extensively cited, referred to and discussed. The challenge of this review is thus to go beyond a first evaluation of the book, a task that has already been done very well by previous reviewers (Brown 2013; Cesnulyte 2013; Smith 2013). Instead, my aim is to reflect on the way in which the monograph has been received and read within wider debates in anthropology and African studies.

The main topic of the book is a complex engagement with different aspects of sexuality in Kenya. Out of the eight chapters of the book, including the Introduction, more than half are exclusively dedicated to an in-depth treatment of various aspects of sexuality. Chapter 1 provides a state-of-the-art summary of regional, theoretical and methodological aspects of sexuality, Chapter 3 discusses sexuality in Kenya in the context of AIDS, Chapter 4 presents biographical and ethnographical narratives of lived sexuality of Spronk's female interlocutors, while Chapter 5 does the same for the male interlocutors. Finally, the concluding

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