

queer persecution and prosecution by the state and subsequent migration to South Africa operate as a prism through which to understand the direct and indirect consequences of the 'Pink Line' on the lives of queer Africans, some of whom exit their countries to seek relief from queerphobia elsewhere on the African continent or in the global North and find other hardships in their new homes.

Gevisser is attentive to the many constituencies who live under an LGBTQ umbrella in different African countries. He recounts the difficulties faced by Amira and Maha, married lesbian proprietors of a café open to LGBTQ people in Cairo, Egypt, in trying to set up a home to share and negotiating the consequences of heightened visibility for gender and sexually diverse people in Egypt after the 2011 revolution. The 'Queen Boat' raid in 2001 haunted the memories of gay, bisexual and queer Egyptian men, constraining their public mobility. He also cites the raid as an 'early plotting of the Pink Line, between a West-oriented "globalized" worldview in which homosexual desires were affirmed into a "gay" identity and subculture, and a patriarchal Muslim society determined to hold its ground against this onslaught and all it represented' (p. 149). In this way, the narrative moves from the micropolitical concerns of queer people maintaining discretion to the macropolitical: how Western state leaders and LGBT activists used this incident to deploy 'us vs. them' rhetoric, thereby demonizing Egyptian authorities for persecuting gay men. What changed in the state's most recent anti-LGBT campaign was the specific focus on harassing and abusing people believed to be 'transgender women (or gender-nonconforming men)' using social media (p. 156).

Writing this book required a tremendous amount of work. Most notably, the author interviewed dozens of subjects multiple times, in person and online. Unlike many ethnographers, Gevisser has remained involved in subjects' lives, offering support and solace where he can. As he observes towards the book's end, 'We are forged by our contexts and, of course, we make our contexts, too' (p. 459). One insight I appreciated from *The Pink Line* is Gevisser's repudiation of a simplistic narrative about how anti-queer mobilization has emerged and proceeded in different African contexts.

I wonder about the stories Gevisser is unable to tell because of their geographic distance from the Pink Line narrative. I offer this rumination not as criticism but as an invitation to readers to pick up the investigative threads Gevisser offers. What other stories might we uncover if we examine African national contexts in which LGBT rights organizing has been less prominent and publicly visible? Given Gevisser's care and concern for African LGBTQ interlocutors, I think that he will encourage readers to continue plotting the Pink Line's course: the unpredictable trajectories of LGBT rights mobilization and queer liberation on the African continent.

Ashley Currier

University of Cincinnati

curriey@ucmail.uc.edu

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Mark Gevisser was a pioneer in the attestation of the lives of non-heterosexual people in South Africa, which also means the continent as a whole. His *Defiant Desire*, coedited with former Constitutional Court judge Edwin Cameron, was a landmark of the era of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy (1990–94). It contained solid scholarly analysis of the history of the repression of sexual and gender diversity in South Africa, of political activism against that, and of literary or artistic representations of same-sex desire. It masterfully wove together ethnographic evidence from people of all race, class, age, gender

and sexual subjectivities to document lived experiences of sexual diversity in a rapidly transforming society.

Gevisser now returns to the topic on a grander scale. In *The Pink Line* he probes issues emerging in the hot zones of struggle for and against sexuality rights and gender diversity globally. Much has changed since 1994. In South Africa, the 1996 constitution explicitly included sexual orientation among categories requiring protection against discrimination, followed by a succession of legal victories and the recognition of same-sex marriage and adoption. Around the world, similar triumphs unfolded. Openly LGBTQ-identifying people won political office, assumed positions of leadership in the corporate world, and posed existential cultural challenges to the old hegemony of binary sexual and gender roles and identities. This coincided with, and indeed was facilitated by, the revolution in information technology that makes sharing new knowledge and social networks around the globe a matter of a few strokes of the keyboard. It coincided with the (highly uneven) rollout of antiretroviral therapies and ‘responsibilization’ campaigns in the fight against HIV.

Yet these very triumphs sparked backlashes that in many parts of the world have resulted in intensified repression and suffering for non-heterosexual and gender non-conforming people. This tension is the subject of Gevisser’s sustained, incisive attention. The book is structured as scholarly research interspersed with journalistic-style interviews and storytelling. It succeeds brilliantly in what is surely its primary goal: shattering the stereotype of a simplistic ‘geography of blame’ (as Paul Farmer described the early stigmatization around HIV and AIDS). Rather than a divide between an enlightened global North and a benighted global South (or West versus East), the fault lines of conflict in these ‘culture wars’ run in complex ways within regions, countries and cities. Gevisser sets this up dramatically near the start by describing his own privileged life in Africa’s ‘gay capital’ (Cape Town) beside that of Tiwonge Chimbalanga, a trans woman living in constant fear for her and her lover’s lives just twenty kilometres away.

The ‘Pink Lines’ dividing opinion about gender and sexuality include class privilege manifest in level of education and access to the internet and other resources. There is also the line between traditional or spiritual expressions of non-binary gender and sex roles (*waria*, *hijras*, *goor djiguen*, ‘*yan daudu*, *babalayan*, *kothi*, and many more) and terms arising from a history of political activism and scientific discourse in the West. The new globalizing language sometimes suggests new meanings that may create new problems for the people so named. This includes attracting unwanted attention from nationalist or religious elites who can opportunistically tar ‘the Gays’ with the charge of moral corruption and Western imperialism.

Speaking of new problems, I do note that very little attention is given to the rapid rise of Pentecostalism or ‘born again’ evangelical Christianity. The new churches tend to draw an even harsher line of intolerance against ‘demons’ than the established churches, and in many parts of Africa are driving a competition for souls not only with older faith expressions and secular ideas but with radical Islamism. The new intolerances flourish as faith in development and democracy wanes, and in the present context of Covid-19, unrelenting economic malaise, climate crisis and internet-fuelled conspiracy theories, that faith is sorely stretched. Is there any evidence that the new fundamentalisms and anti-science thinking can be tempered by appeals to shared humanity or economic benefit in human rights?

Gevisser himself opts for the word ‘queer’ to describe his own political framing but uses the language his interviewees prefer when they speak. He notes appropriately that the word ‘queer’ has been stretched past any coherent meaning in some

academic circles, and that there is an antagonism between an approach that claims to be liberatory yet often imposes itself on people who do not want it.

As in *Defiant Desire*, the subjects of Gevisser's life stories are not always heroes or victims but show, often in their own words, the full range of human emotions and motives. These are not always strictly admirable. However, reconstructing conversations, wondering about psychology, and pointing out contradictions between people's words and deeds make for a compelling, humanizing narrative. Moreover, Gevisser does not let himself off the hook of having mixed feelings on certain issues: Israeli apartheid coexisting with, and somewhat obscured by, a vibrant and progressive gay scene, for example. He also acknowledges his privilege for being able to observe these things, and generally to escape the often very harsh consequences of being on the wrong side of the Pink Line. This points to a central concern for Gevisser throughout the book – how to extend a hand of solidarity across the lines without unintentionally hurting the very people one hopes to help.

Gevisser gives some poignant examples from his own research experiences that will resonate with anyone who has brought a human rights framework and access to money to a place or people where those things are noticeably absent. Simply asking Tiwonge's lover some questions earned a knife attack on her home by another man who suspected that money had been exchanged and that he too deserved to be paid. Elsewhere, Gevisser notes how misguided attempts to help by Western donors or solidarity groups resulted in grievous harms. Yet he manages to end on an optimistic note. Things are getting better not because of Western hectoring or bribery but because people around the world who want at least some of the freedoms won by queer activists in the West are telling their stories to effect change in their own countries and communities. Gevisser's strategy seems wise to me. Rather than be a spark for change himself, he is channelling others' voices for change (and nuance). Bravo!

Marc Epprecht

Queen's University

marc.epprecht@queensu.ca

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This is a visionary book based on intimate research of truly global scope. South African journalist and author Mark Gevisser studies how the complex movement for 'queer' civil rights and the recognition of alternative gender identities created new dividing lines – 'pink frontiers' – all over the world. He notes the surprising rapidity of this process, in comparison with other emancipatory movements. It was only during the last two decades that this process acquired a global scope effecting huge changes in people's lives. Yet, the main thrust of the book is that it effected changes in starkly varying forms, calling forth equally different reactions, varying from support to angry counter-offensives. He illustrates this with a series of personal stories from all over the world, alternated with thematic chapters ('New global cultural wars', 'Pink folk devils', 'Gender-theory panic', 'Pink dollars') that guide readers through all the twists and turns of debates and law making on ever new fronts of the Pink Line.

The story chapters are the result of seven years travelling all over the globe and following friends in very different situations: two LGBT refugees from Malawi and Kenya; an Egyptian lesbian couple struggling to keep their pub going in the heart of Cairo; a Muscovite transgender woman in a legal battle to retain access to her son; young trans people in Michigan; a gay Palestinian–Israeli couple in Tel Aviv; a group of alternative *hijras* (third sex) around a temple in a Tamil fishing village, and many more. With all these people Gevisser succeeded in building an intimate