associations. Local notions have often a more ambiguous charge, implying also enrichment and empowerment.

An inevitable question the book raises is to what extent the 'Pink Line' notion is helpful. It clearly did inspire Gevisser to a truly global view. I wonder whether it does not create too much unity. In the later chapters – again very rich and full of emotion – trans people are foregrounded. But do they want to be grouped under 'pink'? Gevisser notes strong opposition among some feminists and lesbians to include them in the movement. But at least some trans people – aware of the attention lesbians and gays received in the past – might have their own ideas about this. Yet, in these chapters as well, Gevisser is an engaging guide, able to follow unexpected turns and surprising shifts through his unfailing commitment. This is also the main strength of the book: it is a shining tribute to the resourcefulness and zest for life of people in the most threatening situations.

Peter Geschiere
University of Amsterdam
P.L.Geschiere@uva.nl
doi:10.1017/S0001972021000401

Response by the author

Nothing makes me more delighted about the reviews of *The Pink Line* by Ashley Currier, Marc Epprecht and Peter Geschiere – three scholars I respect immensely – than their comments on the book's readability and its immersive nature. I set out exactly – as Currier puts it – to understand the relationship between the 'micropolitics' of people's lives and the 'macropolitics' of the Pink Line. Geschiere writes that 'listening to all these variable stories is liberating in itself'; I want reading them to be so too. Epprecht notes that, to the extent that I think things are 'getting better', it is because people around the world are 'telling their stories'. It is, of course, idealistic to imagine storytelling alone to be liberatory. But given the way in which queer stories have been submerged or suppressed or instrumentalized, particularly in the African context, telling stories and listening to them is a vital act: of critical understanding, but also of solidarity.

It is not just my trust in the narrative power of personal stories that led me to the form of this book: it is an ethical commitment to acknowledge the agency of queer people, when the framing narratives of these times seem to deny this. Queer people have 'acquired political meaning far beyond their own claims to equality and dignity', I write. They have become 'embodiments of progress and worldliness to some, but stigmata of moral and social decay to others'. On one side of the Pink Line, they are seen to be demons to be exorcized: the 'foreign agents' of secular Western imperialism. On the other, they can be seen as victims to be saved, or fetishes of modernity.

I am struck that all three reviewers note the way in which these framing narratives are set in – and by – a world of deep economic inequality. I am grateful to Geschiere for deepening the archive of understanding of the 'gay for pay' canard in Africa: that LGBT identity is a money-making racket. I was acutely aware in my own research about what happens when, as Epprecht puts it, one brings a 'human rights framework and access to money to a place or people where those things are noticeably absent'. I make a point of understanding myself as a Pink Line vector, carrying 'my own ideas and my own experiences in my backpack, not to mention in my wallet (or the perception of it) and even in my own struggle as a gay man', as I write.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972021000541 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Epprecht comments on the scant attention paid in the book to the reasons for the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa. I am sorry that I didn't find space for a little more on this. But the effect of this phenomenon is explored in detail in my analytical chapter 'A new global culture wars?' and the animating context for 'Michael's story' in Uganda. Epprecht wonders where these 'new fundamentalisms' might be 'tempered by appeals to shared humanity or economic benefit in human rights'. In much of Africa, religious fundamentalism trumps the liberalizing forces of globalization when it comes to Pink Line politics: witness the corporate executive I interviewed who works for a major multinational in Lagos with a progressive diversity policy, but who cannot contemplate coming out at work given the power of the church in her world. And, as Epprecht notes, well-meaning acts of solidarity can be counterproductive: they can be used, by nativist Pink Line warriors, to buttress their claims that the drive for 'LGBTQ' rights is being fuelled by the West. Where I have seen this Pink Line dynamic countered, it is by campaigns that build on indigenous movements and traditions: the women's movement in Latin America, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, liberation theology in both places.

Geschiere expresses concerns about the term 'witchcraft', to which my African subjects refer, because of its 'pejorative associations'. In truth, the word 'bewitched' is mine – or, more accurately, my interpreter's. I could not tell you what Chichewa word Aunty and her relatives actually used or what its valences were when they described her juvenile gender trouble. But we chose the word 'bewitched' precisely because of the negative connotations our informants were invoking: they saw it as a curse.

But as Geschiere rightly notes, this is not the whole story, and there are other ways in which Africans reach for the supernatural to explain gender non-conformity – such as, for example, the roots of the *'yan daudu* identity in northern Nigeria. I also note in the book that, in Southern Africa, 'mannish' women can be seen to have the gift of proximity to a male ancestor and can be called to be traditional healers. In South Africa, this has created well-documented space for queer folk within their indigenous traditions. It is also important to note that, in Aunty's story, social relations in her home village actually trumped the 'curse' of bewitchment: she was accepted as female because her uncle, a widower, needs a woman around the house to do the cooking and cleaning, and those who insulted her were fined in the traditional court.

Currier wonders what stories I am not able to tell 'because of their geographic distance from the Pink Line narrative' and invites readers to look for these. I love this challenge, and hope to take it up myself. The Pink Line is sharper in anglophone African countries because of the colonial inheritance of anti-buggery laws and the politics of American Pentecostal theology. Some pathbreaking work has already been done about francophone Africa, but lusophone Africa is crying out for attention: in recent years, Angola and Mozambique have both decriminalized homosexuality, with little opposition.

There is a primary meaning to the Pink Line: a geopolitical frontier in a new global culture war. But as all the reviewers have noted in different ways, I have defined it as fluid and shifting, so that it can work as a conceptual frame from the macro to the micro. It runs not just between countries but through them; through communities and families; between an online sense of connection and liberation and the offline strictures of life in the family, the church, the street or the nation. What is most interesting to me is the way queer people need to toggle between these two ways of being – almost as if existing in two time zones. I describe how a group of queer Nigerian worshippers cross a Pink Line every time a locked door is opened and they can enter their House of Rainbow church in Ibadan,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972021000541 Published online by Cambridge University Press

swapping their play-for-straight attire and gestures for the clothing and expressions that mirror the way they feel inside. In this respect, Pink Lines are everywhere.

Geschiere wonders, on this score, whether I am not shoehorning 'too much unity' into it. He mentions, specifically, my inclusion of trans people in the analysis, and asks whether they might not have 'their own ideas' about being lumped with gays and lesbians, much as some feminists and lesbians seek to exclude trans people, in ways I describe towards the end of the book. I am, of course, aware of the many ways in which trans people face different, and often tougher, struggles than gay people do. For this reason, they often choose to fight their struggles separately: I give examples of this in the Philippines and India, and in the argument I describe between Charlotte and Sean in the US.

Still, Pasha found her voice, and her identity, through the broader Russian 'LGBT' struggle, and Liam and Charlotte found theirs through the 'LGBTQQA' youth group in Ann Arbor, Michigan. There are people in that House of Rainbow church who call themselves 'trans' and others who call themselves 'gay': they worship together, in freedom, in their 'LGBT' church. This is not just because they share culture and community, but because the dominant patriarchal ideologies that cast homosexuality as the dangerous other have now drawn a Pink Line against transgenderism too.

This was Donald Trump's agenda, enjoined in no small part because the battle against gays has been pretty much lost by the religious right in the US. The very reason I conclude my book with trans stories is because I have witnessed the way the dial of a global culture wars has shifted from the 'L' and the 'G' across to the 'T': the new Pink Line, in the US and Western Europe in particular, relates to transgender identity and gender ideology. I can put it no better than the transgender historian Susan Stryker, in her response to my book: '*The Pink Line* traces a planet-spanning fissure that runs through the most intimate dimensions of life, documenting the sometimes literally war-torn rift zones where so-called "traditional values" are being mobilized by states to combat trans, queer and feminist social movements.'

Then there is the way in which 'transgender' itself has become a globalizing word: I write about this, particularly, in Asia, where binary biomedical and rights-based 'trans' identities, emanating from the West, are affecting age-old third-gender and gender-fluid identities such as *hijra* and *bakla*. In my 'Author's note', I write that separating out gender identity from sexual orientation 'might work well in an American context', but this does 'not begin to capture the complex swirl of sexualities and gender identities in other places. If this book has one overarching agenda, it is to show that there is not only one way to be in the world.'

Mark Gevisser
South African author and journalist
mark@markgevisser.com
doi:10.1017/S0001972021000541

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972021000541 Published online by Cambridge University Press