

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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★ **The Pink Line: Journeys across the World's Queer Frontiers.**

By Mark Gevisser

May 2020. 544p. Farrar, \$30 (9780374279967). 305.9

South African journalist Gevisser (*Lost and Found in Johannesburg*, 2014) has written about sexual orientation and gender identity for more than two decades. In this book, he explains the Pink Line dividing the modern world. On one side, countries are expanding human rights; on the other, those same rights are retracted and criminalized. In 2015, the U.S. legalizes same-sex marriage; in 2016 and 2017, China publishes a list of “abnormal sexual relationships” banned from TV. In some countries, LGBTQ+ rights are positioned as a corrupting influence from the West designed to undermine traditional autonomy and values. This dense, well-researched project alternates between chapters contextualizing political and legal events from a high-level view and closeup chapters that follow, empathically and personally, the lives of LGBTQ+ people living on the wrong side of the Pink Line. Auntie, for instance, is a transgender woman from Malawi whose marriage is profiled in the local paper, resulting in her social rejection and harassment. This structure reinforces the social justice belief that the personal is political and vice versa. Gevisser’s monumental effort in this global deep-think of a text outlines how much work remains ahead. This necessary, timely, intelligent book belongs in every library, the world over.

— *Emily Dziuban*