

member; to avert suspicion of husband-snatching or prostitution; to accomplish tasks that only males, and particularly husbands, are supposed to carry out; and for physical and emotional affection. (163)

In other words, sexual relationships between women and men are not a product merely of destitution and vulnerability, but are shaped by relations of cooperation and competition among women as well. Married women, for example, can be extremely hostile toward single women who seem predisposed to enter relationships with men who might include their husbands. Similarly, they can be dismissive of a woman who refuses to enter into a relationship with any man, denying herself thereby the possibility of extra support. Indeed, despite the prevailing ideology that places men at the center of sexual action, Verheijen's books shows that fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers are often at the margins when it comes to women's decisions about sexual partnerships.

The aim of *Balancing Men, Morals, and Money* is to answer the question of whether more money, or as Verheijen would have it, "improved livelihood security," will encourage women to make safer sexual choices in a context where the prevalence of HIV is high. Based on long-term field research in a poor rural village in one of the poorest countries in Africa, and the world, the book suggests the answer is: No. Women's choices of sexual partnerships are not merely driven by destitution indicative of pervasive vulnerability.

*Balancing Men, Morals, and Money* is an important addition to the growing literature on love, sex, money, and AIDS in Africa that shows how African women are not merely vulnerable victims, but agents in shaping their own destinies. It deserves a wide readership.

Adam Ashforth  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
ashforth@umich.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2014.64

**Jenny Trinitapoli and Alexander Weinreb. *Religion and AIDS in Africa*.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xii + 296 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95. Cloth.

It is no easy task to blend demographic and anthropological approaches on topics related to contemporary Africa. Almost inevitably, those on either side of the spectrum walk away feeling dissatisfied that either generalizable breadth or descriptive depth has been compromised. In the case of *Religion and AIDS in Africa*, however, with its clear-cut aim to provide the best empirical assessment of an imminently important topic, the blending works. Trinitapoli and Weinreb have done something unique by combining broad scope, sensitivity to the complexity of both religion and HIV/AIDS, reasoned assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of

data, and a humane awareness of the challenges involved when researching suffering and uncertainty.

Although they don't reference it directly, I sensed the influence of the "lived religion" approach as they addressed the nuances of the relationship between agenda-setters and those in the pews, as well as the fuzziness of the line between "clergy" and "laypeople." Unlike many, if not most, demographic studies of HIV/AIDS, this one is based on a sophisticated concept of religion and its multidimensionality. The authors present much more than regressions of key outcomes by religious tradition or subgroup, in particular focusing on the importance of religious context and intensity of personal religious involvement. Thus, they can conclude that in terms of HIV risk, "it matters much less whether someone is Protestant, Catholic, or Muslim than how religious they are, how religious is the setting in which they live, and the characteristics of the congregation which they attend" (204). They also provide a fascinating discussion of how religious leaders discuss, conceptualize, and disagree about the ultimate spiritual meaning of the epidemic. What these leaders generally share in terms of sacred texts and moral principles is nevertheless applied to quite diverse conclusions about God, sin, and AIDS.

At the same time, the book is not directed only to readers who are interested in religion *qua* religion. Some of its strongest passages deal with the problems of aggregate data in trying to explain variation in HIV prevalence, the relationship between individuals and their moral contexts, the distinction between proximate and ultimate causes in how those affected interpret the epidemic, and the tensions that arise through the conflicting motivations of various stakeholders. The book's discussion of locally arising prevention strategies such as the promotion of divorce is a case in point. Although divorce has never had the visibility of abstinence or condoms within the prevention doctrine, it makes sense and fits within a religious worldview to promote divorce as a sanction against a partner's infidelity. Trinitapoli and Weinreb find fairly widespread support for divorcing an unfaithful partner, and note that incidences of divorce seem to have increased alongside the spread of the epidemic, at least in Malawi.

One aspect that readers may find unsatisfying is the relatively limited attention given to pre-Christian and pre-Islamic traditions of religion and spiritual philosophy. The authors mention beliefs about ancestor involvement in daily life and the use of amulets and charms to ward off infection, for example, but in most cases such beliefs and practices are described in an offhand way that runs the risk of homogenizing African traditional religion. It is true that to address this more directly would embroil them in many ongoing debates about what African traditions across the continent do and do not share, and about their current status in the minds and hearts of contemporary African communities. Nevertheless, I kept hoping for more in-depth treatment of the ways in which Christianity and Islam have been integrated and interpreted through the lens of precolonial religious traditions. After all, it was not that long ago that Christianity and Islam were

minority religions; and in some countries, like Benin or Burkina Faso, local religions still provide a primary identity for many and have wide-ranging influence on daily life for many others. As Ali Mazrui described in his 1979 Reith Lectures, *The African Condition* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), Christianity and Islam exerted influence over somewhat different times, spaces, and problems (i.e., Sunday mornings, theodicy) than those covered by already established traditions, which tended to be applied to practical questions of illness, drought, and fertility. Integrating this insight into the analysis would have strengthened it, especially for an audience concerned with issues specific to the region.

Yet the book still stands as an essential contribution and one that, I think, very few scholars working today in any discipline could have written. By neither vilifying nor idolizing religious devotion, but writing with balance and sensitivity, it demonstrates what good research on religion can provide to a concerned global public. It will work both in the classroom and as a reference for future researchers, and as such comes highly recommended.

Nicolette D. Manglos-Weber  
*The University of Notre Dame*  
 Notre Dame, Indiana

Nicolette.D.Manglos.1@nd.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2014.65

## LANGUAGES, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

**Innocentia Jabulisile Mhlambi. *African Language-Literatures: New Perspectives on IsiZulu Fiction and Popular Black Television Series*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012. 230 pp. Bibliography. Index. R270.00. \$34.95. Paper.**

In an often cited article from 1995 (“African Language-Literature and Postcolonial Criticism,” *Research in African Literatures* 26 [4]), Karin Barber, a leading scholar on African popular culture and African language literatures, complained about the “effacement” of literatures in indigenous languages in postcolonial theory. In many respects, Barber’s complaint represents the starting point for Mhlambi’s *African-Language Literatures: Perspectives on IsiZulu Fiction and Popular Black Television Series*. Focusing on isiZulu, Mhlambi seeks to dissolve two artificial binaries: the first one separating African language literary culture from an investment in modernity, and the second one separating the discursive practices of orality from contemporary writing. In other words, for Mhlambi, following in the footsteps of Barber (and also Ruth Finnegan, particularly *Oral Literature in Africa*, Open Book Publishers, 2012 [1970]), the oral is not necessarily in the past, nor is it always even oral.

Mhlambi’s book offers insight into the place of African language literary expression in South African popular culture, an insufficiently