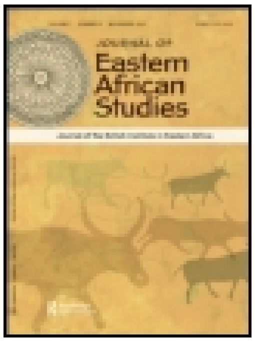

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La Belle Époque from Eastern Africa: an individual experience of the "globalizing" world, 1898–1918

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ABSTRACT
This article seeks to expand our historical understanding of late-nineteenth-century "globalization" through the letters of a female Christian convert living in southeastern Tanganyika. By examining the correspondence between Agnes Sapuli and her educational sponsor in England, the historian can begin to reconstruct the individual, subjective experience of turn-of-the-century global connectedness. In so doing, we find that in the so-called periphery, people were simultaneously plugged in to the global trends of connection and acceleration, while also being keenly aware of the precariousness of those links. Moreover, on the individual level, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century "globalization" included the growth of far-flung, but deeply important, affective relationships – relationships that often proved just as durable as railway ties and steamship routes.

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The period of the late-nineteenth century has been christened with names such as the "Belle Époque" or the "Gilded Age," described as a period during which time sped up, distances shrank, and the world grew increasingly interconnected. Though most now agree that "globalization" did not begin in the nineteenth century, but rather that the global arena as we know it developed centuries earlier, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries still hold prime position as the apex of global technological and political transformations. Railroads, steamships, and telegraphs sped communication and increased mobility on a wide scale.

One thread of the historical literature focuses on this increased interconnection and speed: speed of travel, of communication, and even of social and political change.[1] Acceleration was driven by technology (steamships, railroads, telegraphs, automobiles, motion pictures, and telephones), scientific innovation (germ theory, subatomic particles, and special relativity), and political developments (the unification of Germany, growing nationalism in Europe, the maturation of American power, and the consolidation of global colonial empires). These changes wrought a shift in the mental maps of people all around the world, bringing the optimism that humanity could be made better through "world projects," in tandem with racially-inflected evolutionary thought and cross-cultural comparison and categorization.[2] Thus the late nineteenth century was

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also a period of dreaming: scientific, technological, and political developments were underpinned by optimism that humankind could improve its world and shape its future. As Vanessa Ogle has argued: "What sets the second half of the nineteenth century apart from earlier examples and periods of dense connections and interactions is this apprehension of globality, the realization of and reflection on the fact that the world was interconnected."[3] And in many ways the historiography pertaining to the late-nineteenth century has mirrored the confidence of its historical actors, invoking "world projects," acceleration, and global connectedness.[4]

In this piece I want to explore this late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century sense of possibility, but removed from its traditional center of study (i.e. Europe and North America). There were people in the proverbial periphery who, though far from the tangle of railroad tracks and daily newspaper deliveries criss-crossing Europe, still partook of the world-encompassing, future-oriented sense of acceleration and connection most closely associated with Western scientists and colonialists. I argue that without the inclusion of this perspective in analyses of the late-nineteenth century, our historical understanding of connectedness and mobility is largely parochial despite its global aspirations. The view from the traditionally-classified periphery offers a keen sense of the continued tenuousness of global connections, whether an individual was living in London or in east-central Africa. The piece also attempts to bring forth a new object of analysis, shifting our attention from the state, the scientific association, the political party, or the business conglomerate, to the individual and subjective experience of late-nineteenth-century acceleration and delay. To do so, I examine the letters of a female Christian convert living in what is today southeastern Tanzania.[5] Agnes Sapuli was a teacher, a mother, a wife, and an inveterate letter writer. Sapuli's letters make clear that individuals in the periphery partook of the late-nineteenth-century transitions in terms of travel, communication, and expanded horizons of time and space; however, as Emma Hunter has written, the almost single-minded historiographic focus on twentieth-century connectivity and change runs the risk of "re-marginalizing the people who were less connected, and of neglecting the deep histories of the places they lived."[6] Agnes Sapuli's determination to correspond makes clear the simultaneous experience of acceleration and delay, of connectedness and disconnection, that could mark individual experiences of these global changes.

Indeed, some of her contemporaries were concerned about the flip-side to increasing speed and connectivity, worrying that accelerated exchange and uniformity would take the humanity out of human interactions, and would rend the profound (perhaps indispensable?) connection between man and nature.[7] One need only think of Salvador Dali's melting watches to be struck by ambivalence about the role of time and timepieces in our lives. Scientists and academics, too, could become overwhelmed by the acceleration of their fields, leading to, in the words of Lorraine Daston, an "intrinsically melancholy" resignation about their own contributions to progress.[8] There was, moreover, still a great deal of distance and delay to contend with, despite the speed of steamships and telegraphs.

Historians, too, have explored this ambivalence, examining how changes in the perception of time and space were not just applied to, or enforced in, non-Western settings, but rather reinterpreted and incorporated in very specific ways into various contexts.[9] Felicitas Becker, for instance, demonstrated how Islam was adopted by certain inland Tanzanian communities not simply because of coastal prestige, but because its carriers and their messages resonated with local concerns, hopes, and cultures; Jeremy Prestholdt showed how consumers in nineteenth-century Zanzibar incorporated symbols of "modernity" into longstanding social and cultural power structures; and On Barak argued that turn-of-the-century Egyptians deliberately utilized both standardized and non-standardized methods of transport, timekeeping, and exchange to shape their engagement with modernity.[10] While such studies have crucially de-centered Euro-America in conversations about late-nineteenth-century global change, their units of analysis are still most often the community, the state, the organization, or the class. Building upon these histories which describe the shifting horizons of time and space in the periphery, my aim is to bring the individual into focus: to see how a woman in southeastern Tanganyika experienced and reflected upon her place in an increasingly interconnected world.

Agnes Sapuli and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa

The Universities' Mission to Central Africa was an Anglican missionary society formed in 1857. Its initial evangelical aim was the great lakes region of east-central Africa. After a disastrous start on the mainland, however, the mission withdrew to Zanzibar in 1864, and very quickly established itself on the island, opening schools for children who had been caught up in the East African slave trade. The UMCA was an inveterately optimistic organization, rebounding from its calamitous start in the Shiré River valley, to headquarter itself on a majority-Muslim island – an evangelical task of immense proportions. In reality, the mission made few serious attempts to convert the Muslim subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar; rather it began by taking in former slaves. After the closing of the Zanzibar slave market in 1873, the Royal Navy began patrolling the coast for illicit traders, depositing some of the children they had "liberated" into the care of the mission; these made up the first large influxes of students to fill the classrooms and pews of the UMCA. The mission's congregation was thus multi-ethnic, multilingual, and made up of people – both European and African – who found themselves living together very far from home. As the nineteenth century wound to a close and the slave trade was slowly squeezed out of existence, the mission began expanding its evangelical efforts on the mainland, eventually establishing stations as far west as Lake Nyasa (Malawi). This resulted in a demographic shift in the mission's student population, and by the 1890s the majority of the student body was made up of never-enslaved children from the regions surrounding the mission stations. And yet Zanzibar remained at the center of the UMCA imagination, the home of its theological college at Kiungani (until 1925), and the hub through which both African and European members of the mission circulated with regularity.

Born in the early 1880s at Chitangali, a village in the neighborhood of the UMCA's Masasi station, Ajanjeuli Achitinao would attend a mission school, be baptized and given the name Agnes, marry a Kiungani student (Francis Sapuli), and herself teach at various UMCA schools until her death in 1918. Sapuli wrote twenty-one letters to her English sponsor, Reverend Cyril Child, between 1898 and 1912. Almost all of the letters include both the original Swahili and an English translation.[11] She entered the mission's records in the 1890s via the pen of Cecil Majaliwa, who came to Chitangali first as a teacher and then, in 1890, as the mission's first African priest.[12] Majaliwa's wife Lucy started a day-school for girls, and Ajanjeuli Achitinao was one of her students.[13] In 1895, Achitinao and her family moved to Chiwata, and two years after that a missionary wrote to Reverend Child about "your girl Ajanjeuli."[14] By that time, she was officially a sponsored student, whose education would thenceforth be paid for by Reverend Child's St. Agnes' Church in Kennington Park, London. In the same letter the missionary priest reported: "She is delightfully promising, age about 14 – bright – clever so much above the average that she is a sort of pupil teacher under Hugh's wife at Chivata [Chiwata]."[15] Achitinao was still unbaptized, but the priest hoped to do so by Christmas of 1897, and asked Child if he would like her to take the baptismal name of Agnes, after Child's parish church.[16] It was in 1898 that Achitinao began writing to Child herself, reporting in one of her first letters that she had indeed been baptized and given the name Agnes.[17] This was the beginning of a chain of correspondence that continued for more than a decade. Just as Agnes began writing to Child, she also became engaged to Francis Sapuli, a student of the Chitangali school who had trained as a teacher on Zanzibar. The couple was married in 1900 (in the interim both of Agnes' parents had died) and they settled at Mwiti where they taught at the mission out-school. In September 1901 Sapuli gave birth to her first child, a daughter who was baptized Rose Annie Sapuli.[18] Over the course of her life, Sapuli gave birth to six children, but only Rose Annie and John Owen (born in June of 1912) survived past childhood.[19] In 1910 Francis became a Reader – a lay evangelist – and he and Agnes moved multiple times in the Masasi region as Francis embarked on this new work.[20] The Sapuli family was in Chilimba when World War I came crashing down on East Africa; Sapuli's letters cease to appear during the years of the war. She survived the global war only to fall ill and die during her sixth pregnancy, on 9 August 1918. Francis wrote to Child, giving an account of his wife's last days. He grieved, but wrote that he drew consolation from her piety in the face of death, recounting: "Oh! she died in faith indeed … so your prayers which you prayed for her for many years, I can say without hesitation that God had heard it."[21] Francis' letter brought to an end the remarkable correspondence between Agnes Sapuli and Cyril Child, a correspondence that had traveled along the UMCA's transcontinental network between two of its extreme ends.

Literacy is naturally at the center of this story about a late-nineteenth-century female letter-writer. Sapuli's ability to correspond in Swahili was the result of her entrance into the community of the Universities' Mission which, like Protestant missions around the world, stressed the necessity for adherents to be able to read the Bible for themselves and, unlike most other missions even in eastern Africa, centered its linguistic intentions not on a series of local vernaculars but rather on the powerful lingua franca of Swahili.[22] Scholars long focused on this "encounter" between oral and literate cultures across the continent, perhaps drawing a too-sharp distinction between the two. More recently, historians such as Karin Barber, Pier Larson, and Derek Peterson have shown how literacy has been utilized by individuals from Nigeria to Madagascar to shape their communities, argue about politics, and maintain connections across time and space.[23] Their work makes clear that teaching people to read and write, often in language standards chosen by outside forces, could be both revolutionary and quickly incorporated into local modes of social interaction. Agnes may have been just such a "tin trunk" author, using her letters to archive her individual subjectivity for posterity, to publicly project her conversion to Christianity, as well as to stay in touch with friends left behind as well as those never encountered.[24] What we know for certain, however, is that literacy was a baseline requirement for engagement with certain forms of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century global connection, from newspapers and telegrams to time-tables and international regulations. Many people who could not read or write of course engaged with global transformations in communication and exchange, but the personal nature of Agnes Sapuli's participation stemmed from her literacy in one of the world's growing global languages.

Because of her letters, Sapuli is also one of the few female members of the mission that the historian can get to know with any certainty, through her own words. She joins a small group of female writers from eastern Africa in the late nineteenth century, women like Emily Ruete (Princess Sayyida Salme) or (half a century earlier) Mwana Kupona, individuals who learned to read and write because of their relatively privileged social positions, and who used their writing to reach beyond their local communities for a variety of reasons. These women witnessed and documented the social, cultural, and technological changes taking place during their lifetimes, offering advice (Kupona), making the case for their place in a specific community (Salme), or seeking to connect with a transcontinental network that spanned Zanzibar, mainland east-central Africa, and England (Sapuli). With the letters of Agnes Sapuli, I argue here, we can begin to piece together how individuals may have experienced the shifting horizons of time and space in the late-nineteenth century, seeing how the connectivity of the period was combined with delay. In what follows, I examine Sapuli's experiences of connection and disconnection, first across space, then across time. By paying careful attention to these individual reflections on the world in late-nineteenth-century eastern Africa, it becomes apparent how intimately connected were the experiences of acceleration and delay, global and local, and individual and communal.

Feeling distance: connection and separation

In her letters, Sapuli reflected upon separations in space, even as she expressed a distinct sense of connection to people living very far away. In particular, she referenced the distances between mainland East Africa, Zanzibar, and England, as well as between this world and heaven. To begin with earthly distance: while Sapuli did find regularity in her correspondence with Cyril Child, those connections could be tenuous, and her letters displayed the simultaneous normalcy of communication at long distances, and the uncertainty of those communicative links. On one hand, the sense of distance and uncertainty was exacerbated by the necessary mobility of the evangelist teacher. Agnes Sapuli's family first moved from Chitangali to Chiwata, and after Francis' schooling on Zanzibar the couple settled at the station at Mwiti, in southeastern Tanganyika. In 1910 they were sent to Luatala where Francis began work as a Reader. After just a year the family was transferred to Chilimba where Francis continued his work of evangelization (both stations were also in the Masasi region.)[25] The frequent moves of the young Sapuli family forced them to relearn how to connect over and over again. At the same time, this mobility reiterated their links to the broader UMCA community, with its outstations stretching from Zanzibar to Lake Nyasa. Agnes, Francis, and many other adherents of the Universities' Mission were mobile "cosmopolitans" much like the participants in the East African Revival as described by Derek Peterson.[26] The converts of Peterson's story used technologies of travel and communication (the postal system, roads, bicycles, and cars) to communicate with and, at large Revival meetings, sometimes meet with fellow-believers in a "large, multi-sited field of action."[27] They were simultaneously creating and being created by a "field of discourse that drew together people who were widely separated by language and geography."[28]

Both the Revivalists and the adherents of the Universities' Mission used their correspondence, their mobility, and their prayers to shrink the distances between them, creating a coherent community within east-central Africa.

The mobility of others also helped to bridge the distance between Africa and Europe. Though I have not found Child's letters, the two clearly exchanged a significant amount of detail about one another's lives. But this communicative link sometimes required that people travel great distances. In 1911, for instance, Sapuli reported to Child that an English priest had come through Chilimba:

> he told us much about the Church of St. Agnes and of you Padre Child, he told us that you are a tall man with a beautiful black beard, and again that you are a good person. He was very happy to see us and to see the picture of St. Agnes' Church.[29]

Sapuli and Child had been writing back-and-forth for over a decade, and yet details like the color of Child's beard would have remained unknown but for the circulation of people, and these details circled back through an ongoing correspondence.

Sapuli ranged even further with her letters, embracing the breadth of the UMCA community that stretched from her house in Chilimba, to a parsonage in London. Again, it was her literacy in Swahili that allowed Sapuli to engage with an international network in such a personal, individualized way. In the course of her correspondence, Sapuli reported on the comings and goings of teachers, priests and other clergymen, expressing familiarity with far-flung people, many of whom she had never met. For instance, she carefully sent greetings to specific members of Child's parish, asking after their health, the news of the Church of St. Agnes, and of Child himself.[30] "What news these days from Europe?" Sapuli asked casually in 1900.[31] She was familiar with Reverend Child and many of his specific parishioners at St. Agnes' Church, and sent greetings to them in her letters: "Also many greetings to my friends Elspeth Holland and Violet McIntyre, tell them I have not had a chance to write them, perhaps next journey."[32] In another letter Agnes asked Child: "Also tell Agnes Piercy and Ada White, Ellen, Patrick and Maude Scott thank you very much for their gift, I have written a longish letter to Agnes Piercy and I hope she will share it with her fellows."[33]

Besides such greetings and messages of thanks, Agnes' letters requested and offered prayers from a distance, adding threads to the spiritual and affective linkages of the UMCA network. Both materially (for Child sometimes supplied much-needed goods like school supplies and bicycle tubes) and metaphysically, Sapuli's correspondence with England was hopeful. The presence of emotions in historical documentation, let alone the analysis of emotion in the past, is a slippery task that is susceptible to sliding into psychoanalysis-at-a-distance. Hope – imperative to evangelical practice and linguistically traceable in Sapuli's letters – however, offers a potential emotion for examination. Her appeals for prayer spanned the physical and spiritual worlds, and they were constant, found in every letter, sometimes multiple times. "Also I want them to remember me always in their prayers," she wrote of her correspondents at St. Agnes', "just as I always remember them."[34] Or later that year, she expressed gratitude for their spiritual intercession, writing: "Truly I am happy to see that you increasingly remember me and pray for me to our Lord God. Likewise I must remember you all in my prayers always."[35] Even faced with the death of his wife, as we saw, Francis referenced his family's prayerful connection with the English sponsors, telling them that their prayers – "which you prayed for her for many years" – had not been lost on God.[36]

Letters and prayer, Agnes was well aware, were the closest connections she would have with her sponsor and his parish. But though she would never meet them in this life, she hoped that they would see one another in the next. In 1899, for instance, Agnes wrote to Child:

> I long for the happiness of seeing one another in this world face-to-face, but it is not possible, my hope is truly that we will see one another in heaven, when we will meet in front of our Father who loves us always. But now we see one another with faith in our prayers.[37]

In another letter Agnes reiterated her desire to see her St. Agnes' sponsors:

> I want very much to see you all. But I am not able. We will see one another with Faith in our prayers. We will see one another in heaven. This paper is indeed the paper you all sent to me in your Writing Case. God protect us all and bless us and we will be able to see one another in that great happiness in heaven.[38]

Here Sapuli's thoughts shifted between the physical impossibility of seeing her correspondents; the hope – indeed, the certainty – of seeing them in heaven; and the physical connection of writing a letter on paper that they had sent to her.

Besides the connections forged by people, letters, and prayer, Agnes and Francis also prominently displayed photographs of the people and church of St. Agnes' in their home, writing that they "remind me every day of my friends at St. Agnes."[39] In fact, a visiting missionary reported to Child that, "the most prominent object in his [Francis'] house is a large photo of the East End of S. Agnes', Kennington!"[40] The photographic connections to the church represented one way in which longing and hope, distance and connection, were a part of the Sapulis' everyday experiences. Even after the World War and Agnes' death, in 1919, Francis wrote to Child that he would like to dedicate his new church building at Chilimba to Saint Agnes, "for our thanksgiving to you, as you know that for your alms and prayers to us we have done our work. So tell our friends about St. Agnes."[41] This was a symbolic but clearly very meaningful exchange for Francis, to mark the establishment of a sister church in Chilimba.

These two St. Agnes', one in England, one in eastern Africa, fittingly encapsulate the Sapulis' experience of the simultaneous foreshortening and distinct awareness of distance. Through the movement of people and letters, as well as through wishes of wellbeing and prayer, Sapuli spanned the distance between herself and her sponsor, not to mention the physical and spiritual world. It was through these connections that Agnes maintained the hope of seeing her correspondents *mbinguni*, in heaven. Though the two St. Agnes' churches were thousands of miles apart, and that distance created delay and longing, it also nurtured affinity across space. And in the very act of writing, Sapuli reinforced the linkages necessary to maintain and grow the affective and intellectual network of the UMCA.

Feeling time: acceleration and delay

Alongside distance, in her letters Sapuli also reflected on time in multiple ways, and on multiple scales. First came her immediate concerns that letters arrived on time; second was the longer time-frame of the hoped-for Christianization of eastern Africa; and finally, Sapuli's letters showed her to be reckoning with perpetual reminders of birth, death, and generational turn-over. While the letters steamed confidently between East Africa and England, they were nonetheless few and far between, offering only occasional glimpses of time as it slipped, sped, and slogged by from one day to another.

The timing involved in sending letters was crucial and somewhat erratic. As Sapuli wrote in November of 1899: “I hope you will get this letter before or close to Christmas.”[42] She had to account for the time it would take to get her letters to Masasi, let alone from there to the coast to catch a mail steamer. Sapuli explained in another letter:

> Tell Miss Clara Garnett hello and that I will write her a letter for the second mail, today I am very rushed because tomorrow is the post at Masasi and here at our place we are a bit far from Masasi.[43]

From there, letters would be carried to the port city of Lindi, to be sent on to their various destinations via Zanzibar or, after the 1890s, the regular steamer service put in place by the German colonial administration. As always, however, weather, political upheaval, accidents, and other mishaps could disrupt this flow of correspondence.

Communication was one of the foremost concerns of every letter-writer on Zanzibar. Mails coming and going, mails delayed, fluctuations in postage prices, supplies collected or lost, telegrams received and sent: these were topics of constant repetition in both missionary and British official correspondence. Though Zanzibar was a relatively well-connected place, the technological and logistical links were still tenuous at best. Expected ships went missing or were delayed with no explanation; letters and packages were damaged; ships caught fire or had accidents; and mail was left behind in other ports.[44] That the Nyasa mail was being “sent daily” in 1890, according to *Central Africa*, signaled that communication between the Cape and Quelimane was so irregular that mail could only be sent “as opportunity occurs.”[45] Indeed, communication with the mainland stations could be even more difficult than between Zanzibar and England. Besides seasonal rains that made overland travel precarious, political upheaval sometimes hindered communication.[46] Delays occurred, for instance, at the introduction of a pass system as Germany exerted power in its new coastal territories.[47] Besides the Germans, local African authorities sometimes prevented easy passage to missionaries as the century wound to a close.[48] There was also the upheaval of the Maji Maji war (1905–07) that wreaked havoc on parts of the southeast region. The consolidation of European control over eastern Africa did not at first ease the missionaries’ obsession with communication, nor that of their adherents.

From the mission’s early years on Zanzibar, the unfettered passage of mails was regarded as a “measure of common humanity.”[49] The mission correspondence was rife with longing for communication from home: “We are the unluckiest people in the world in our Mails,” wrote the UMCA priest Edward Steere to his wife in 1865.[50] Steere referred in his diary to “the mystery that now hangs over all our correspondence,” and Rev. Lewin Pennell wrote to him of the “chronic state of excitation about letters.”[51] The missionaries craved news from home. After a long delay, Steere wrote with his typical wry humor: “A few newspapers have since come down from Bombay which leads us to believe that England still exists, but we shall be very glad when we get more definite information.”[52] News could assuage the loneliness and feelings of separation, but its absence led to weariness and disappointment. Correspondence was precious, and the missionaries lived and breathed by the news that came from home and from their sister stations. African adherents, too, were determined to maintain the important connections that they had built at the mission’s schools. And as Agnes Sapuli’s letters demonstrate, the communicative links between the mission’s various extremes were both incredibly important, and sometimes painfully delicate.

Beyond the simpler concerns of timing her letter-writing with mail-days, Sapuli was also acutely aware of "evangelical time." That is, though she and her fellow evangelists were resigned to the fact that the Christianization of their local areas (let alone all of east-central Africa) would take a very long time, she was unfailingly hopeful that this would be the ultimate outcome of the mission's efforts. Sapuli's conversion itself was a demonstration of the obstacles in the way of evangelical achievement. When Cecil Majaliwa first wrote to Child about her, he noted:

> I am very sorry to say about Ajanjeuli that she cannot be baptized just yet, she is wee little thing and cannot stand to fight with her parents when she is forced to do their wicked heathen customs, her parents are very bad people.[53]

Six years later, after Ajanjeuli had been baptized as Agnes and begun attending school, she wrote herself to the parish at St. Agnes' about her rather hurried wedding to Francis Sapuli: "I was not able to tell you all because the wedding was sudden, because there was a person who prevented me from marrying my husband."[54] She and Francis had to go to the archdeacon to "arrange things" before it "became possible" to wed.[55] Who exactly opposed the marriage is not clear from the letter, but it is possible that Agnes' family did not want her to be tied up in a Christian union.

Sapuli's letters frequently referenced her and Francis' sense of isolation at the UMCA outstations, where they were surrounded by "*washenzi*" ("heathens" or "barbarians").[56] "The lives of Christians in these parts are dangerous," she wrote, "because in any one village there are two or three Christians, but many are only heathens, therefore many times we get news from those Christians who are there that that have ceased in their Christianity."[57] In this same letter, Sapuli called for the prayers of the parishioners of St. Agnes' because "without your prayers we have no strength to do our work which is great because there are still many heathen who have not yet encountered the Word of God … "[58] And yet there were occasional spiritual victories, such as the deathbed conversion of the local *mfalme* (king) at Mwiti; or the ordination of Yohana Barnaba, a local boy from Chiwata, as priest; or the slow, inconsistent increase of children attending her schools.[59] Here we begin to see how the long-term scale of the evangelical project could incubate hope alongside frustration; for while Sapuli felt herself to be surrounded by "*washenzi*" who might not be converted in her lifetime, she believed herself to be a part of a long-term, global evangelical project in which her faith was unshaken.[60]

Sapuli's letters marked, as we have seen, the passage of pragmatic time (when to send letters, and the hope of receiving them), and of evangelical time (the long-term hope of East African, or indeed global, Christianization). The third temporal register marked in the letters is that of generational time: the feelings of hope and despair that came from witnessing birth and death within her own lifetime. The turnover of generations was no doubt linked to the longer-term project of evangelization. Though Sapuli mourned the deaths of both of her parents, who died in the two years before Agnes married Francis, their passing also represented, potentially, the death of the generation of non-believers. Despite sadness at the fact that she no longer had living parents, Agnes wrote after her mother's death: "but I have the one Father in Heaven, that is God."[61]

Childbirth, too, was very naturally an event imbued with hope for the future, and Agnes and Francis had great hopes for their children. They placed a high value on their literary education, desiring that they too would take part in the mission's physical and communicative network. Agnes and Francis sent Rose Annie, their eldest child, to a mission boarding school at Masasi when she was ten years old.[62] A year later Agnes reported on her daughter's progress: "Now she knows how to read and write and sew a little bit."[63] When she was able to write well, Agnes continued, Rose would send the children of St. Agnes' a letter of her own.[64] Rose did eventually write a letter to the students at St. Agnes', offering up bits of news about her own school and her family, and concluding: "I want to get your letters and as for me this is truly the first letter I have written to you all in my own hand."[65] Her brother John Owen also attended school: though his education was interrupted by the First World War, in 1924 he entered the Central School at Chiwata, the second rung of the regional mission education ladder.

But for Sapuli, childbirth had so often resulted in tragedy that it was not an unambiguously hopeful proposition – as mentioned, the Sapulis lost four children soon after birth. In the letters, Sapuli expressed pious resignation at the deaths of her children: "God indeed gave them to me and it pleased him to take them back again to him."[66] Yet Sapuli and her husband clearly experienced intense grief, which seeps into one particularly tragic letter that Agnes wrote in August of 1908. In that month, her elder sister and her sister's child died, followed soon thereafter by the death of her own infant child, Frank Joshua. In this same letter, Sapuli included a photo taken before the death of her son, writing to Child: "you will see him in the Photo, I held him in my arms, and now he has died, and now my sadness only grows, this year I am a person of great sadness."[67] These life cycles were too abrupt to be incorporated into the forward-looking evangelical time, rather serving only as reminders of the fragility of life and the immensity of the task ahead. Agnes herself died just after a pregnancy, yet another reminder for her family and her correspondents of how closely life and death were intertwined.

Rose Annie and John Owen, meanwhile, embodied all of their parents' hopes for the future. They were ambassadors of the generation of children brought up in Christian households, who would (it was hoped) carry forward the longer-term evangelical project of their parents. These hopes of course matched those of the European leadership of the Universities' Mission, whose evangelical strategy was centered around the creation of Christian family units, headed by men who could serve as teachers, clergy, or simply as examples in their communities, in order to carry forth the conversion of eastern Africa more effectively than could the limited British staff of the UMCA. The mission system of schooling was formed with this vision of the future in mind: the Kiungani boarding school on Zanzibar for future teachers and clergymen; the high school to train clerks, artisans, or practitioners of other trades; and the nearby Mbweni boarding school to train Christian wives and mothers. This pattern was repeated as the mission expanded on the mainland, opening a teacher-training and theological college at Likoma and, eventually, moving the Kiungani students to Minaki, close to Dar es Salaam; meanwhile, each diocese on the mainland grew to have a central school, surrounded by various smaller out-schools for early education. The education of their students, wrote one missionary commentator, "must be of such a character as to help him to meet the march of civilisation from the Christian standpoint; it need not be elaborate; it must needs be Christian."[68] The UMCA perceived its schools as "centre[s] from which Christianity spreads," and argued that "the teacher in charge of each school is an evangelist."[69] The vision of Africans evangelizing Africans was not unique to the UMCA; mission societies around the continent, often lacking adequate European personnel, relied on their converts to continue spreading their message.

But despite the mission's long-held commitment to an eventual, potentially very far-off, African-led church, Sapuli and her family were growing during a period in which the number of priests and other clergy being ordained had stagnated, and some in the mission leadership began to question the goal of "Africanization."[70] The length of time between ordinations from deacon to priest grew longer, and between 1910 and 1915 the number of clergymen serving in the Zanzibar and Nyasaland Dioceses actually decreased by one, from 24 to 23.[71] In the meantime, the mission was growing slowly but steadily, so that the ratio of African clergymen to adherents was one to 618 in 1895, and ballooned to one clergyman for every 1683 adherents in 1920.[72] One wonders if the pessimism of the leadership seeped into the consciousness of African evangelists on the ground, thus curtailing their faith in the long-term evangelical project, just as they were being battered by day-to-day tribulations, not to mention the ups and downs of generational time.

Experiencing distance and time: the global connectedness of Agnes Sapuli

Sometime around 1858, a woman from Pate named Mwana Kupona composed a poem addressed to her daughter. It offered advice on how to navigate the world as a woman, a pious Muslim, a wife, and a mother. The third verse of the *Utendi wa Mwana Kupona* reads:

Ndoo mbee ujilisi	Come forward and be seated
na wino na qaratasi	bring with you ink and paper
moyoni nina hadithi	I have in mind a story
nimependa kukwambia	that I have longed to tell you.[73]

Mwana Kupona wrote using the Arabic script, in the Lamu dialect of Swahili, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century; and yet her desire to tell a story, to write it down, and to connect with the wider world even while addressing an individual, is unmistakably echoed in the correspondence of Agnes Sapuli, written several decades later. For these women and the relatively few others like them (who included other female teachers of the Universities' Mission), literacy represented the most direct way for individuals to connect with the broad trends of historical change occurring at the turn of the twentieth century. A woman residing in southeastern Tanganyika was removed from opportunities of non-written exchange with the wider world for social, cultural, and logistical reasons, but letter-writing offered an entry-point into the globalization of the late nineteenth century.

The perspectives of figures like Agnes Sapuli make evident that the changes of "La Belle Époque" – changes in communication, transport, political entanglement, spiritual loyalty, and more – reached beyond the metropole and certain particularly "cosmopolitan" colonial cities into the interior of eastern Africa. However, this story is more than just a confirmation of the conventional historical narrative of connection and acceleration. With the careful examination of figures from regions not traditionally included of the historiography of globalization, we see that individual experiences of the speed of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries went hand-in-hand with the fear of being left behind. Though both distance and time separated Agnes Sapuli from her correspondents, her letters are proof that she nonetheless experienced the increased global connectedness of the late nineteenth century – and it was a connectedness that could be fraught with frustration, as when mails went missing or ships didn't arrive. For the individual, globalization entailed both feeling more connected and mourning disruptions to those connections. Correspondence with far-flung places – including epistolary, technological, affective, and intellectual correspondence – bred comparison, and in that way acceleration became relative. Through Sapuli's letters we see how acceleration and delay could be experienced simultaneously, within a single individual. Only with the addition of this view from the "periphery" can studies of the globalizing nineteenth and twentieth centuries make a true claim to globality.

I would like to conclude by suggesting that the life and letters of Agnes Sapuli can also offer an entrée into the literature on the history of emotions, an avenue deserving of future research. In a 2012 *American Historical Review* "Conversation" on the historical study of emotions, the editor pinpointed the difficulty of such research: "is it possible to go beyond emotional *expressions* – usually conveyed in language – and attain some assurance that these are indicative of actual emotional *states*?"[74] With Agnes Sapuli I have done the former – traced her written expressions of hope, including through appeals for and assurances of prayer – but how might one begin to uncover the latter? There are models, among which are Andreana Prichard's work on the female adherents of the Universities' Mission, which uncovered the "affective spiritual community" that united women across generations; Nancy Rose Hunt's exploration of the connections between affective, intellectual, and gender history in an article for the *Journal of African History*; Elisabeth McMahon's use of court cases to uncover struggles about marriage and love on Zanzibar; and the contributions to Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas' volume *Love in Africa* which offered numerous perspectives on the historical study of that emotion.[75] In the case of Agnes Sapuli, perhaps the persistence of the letters and the continued expressions of hope even in face of tribulation are in fact a demonstration of the historical existence of that emotion – for even if she did not feel it constantly in her heart, and even when her mind doubted, Agnes Sapuli consistently put pen to paper over the course of fourteen years, demonstrating her hope that the letter would reach its intended recipient and effect its anticipated outcomes. Sapuli's letters beg several questions for further inquiry: how has hope changed over time and space? Who has felt hope, and who has lacked hope? When has hope been stoked and when stamped out? Have certain periods, or places, been more "hopeful" than others? If scholars agree that the turn of the twentieth century was a time of dreaming and possibility – the advent of the period of "world projects" – then hope was not an ethereal fish-out-of-water in the rationalist, imperialist, and modernist ethos of the late-nineteenth century. Rather, hope was central to the projects of the age. Sapuli's letters demonstrate how hope could be planted in connectivity and acceleration – and nurtured at a distance and in delay.

Notes

1. For works that describe the turn of the twentieth century as a period of increasing interconnectivity, see: Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 10–38 and 240–83; Carey, "Technology and Ideology," 201–30; Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World*; Krajewski, *World Projects*; Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*; Evans, *The Pursuit of Power*; and Jasanoff, *The Dawn Watch*.
2. See Ogle, *Global Transformation*; and Barak, *On Time*.
3. Ogle, *Global Transformation*, 4.
4. Krajewski, *World Projects*.

5. For the remainder of the piece, I use the term "Tanganyika" to refer to Sapuli's location, though the period in question pre-dated the British designation of the territory as such. I find Tanganyika to be the clearest way to reference the mainland portions of the future country of Tanzania, as distinct from Zanzibar.
6. Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere*, 234–5.
7. See Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*; and Rosa and Scheuerman, *High Speed Society*. For a critical, though somewhat outmoded, look at nineteenth-century technology transfer from colonial metropole to periphery, see Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress*.
8. Daston, "The Immortal Archive," 175.
9. See: Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*; Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity"; Ogle, *Global Transformation*; Barak, *On Time*; and Conrad, "'Nothing is the Way It Should Be'," 821–48.
10. See: Felicitas Becker, *Becoming Muslim*; Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*; and Barak, *On Time*.
11. Andreana Prichard posited that the Swahili versions were dictated by Sapuli and written by an amanuensis: Prichard, *Sisters in Spirit*, 145. It is unclear who did the translations or where this occurred; Russell and Pollock speculated that they were done at the mission's London headquarters by members who could read Swahili: Russell and Pollock, *News from Masasi*, 2.
12. For general biographical information available about Ajanjeuli/Agnes, I have found the study written by Russell and Pollock very helpful.
13. Bodleian Libraries, Commonwealth and African Collections, University of Oxford (BDL): UMCA Box List A-F: AF, Letter from Majaliwa to "My dear Friend," 22 August 1895.
14. See: Russell and Pollock, *News from Masasi*, 89–91; and BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Carnon to Child, 13 September 1897.
15. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Carnon to Child, 13 September 1897. The priest referred here to Hugh Mtoka, a deacon at Chiwata.
16. Ibid.
17. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 15 March 1898.
18. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 17 October 1901.
19. For reference to three of the children who died see: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Francis and Agnes Sapuli to Child, 20 September 1912. See also: Russell and Pollock, *News from Masasi*, 122–4 and 159. Rose Annie was born on 23 September 1901, and John Owen on 15 June 1912.
20. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, All Saints Day, 1911; and BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Postcard from S.M. Elliott to Child, 28 November 1912.
21. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Francis Sapuli to Child, 16 October 1919. Francis wrote the letter in English.
22. For more on the history of Standard Swahili, see: Robinson, "An Uncommon Standard."
23. Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*; *Africa's Hidden Histories*; Larson, *Ocean of Letters*; Peterson, *Creative Writing*; and Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*.
24. Barber, *Africa's Hidden Histories*, 3–4.
25. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, All Saints Day, 1911; and UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Postcard from S.M. Elliott to Child. For biographical information see also Russell and Pollock, *News from Masasi*.
26. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival*. See especially "Chapter Two: The Infrastructure of Cosmopolitanism," 37–49. The Revival was a movement that began within the Anglican community in northern Rwanda in the 1930s and quickly spread throughout the region.
27. Ibid., 49.
28. Ibid., 42.
29.

> … ametueleza sana khabari za Kanisa la St. Agnes na zako wewe Padre Child ametuambia ya kuwa ni mtu mrefu mwenye ndevu nyeusi nzuri, tena ya kuwa ni mtu mwema. Alifurahi sana kutuona na kuona sanamu ya Kanisa la St. Agnes.

BDL: UMCA A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, All Saints Day, 1911. All translations from the Swahili are my own, assisted by the translations included with each letter. Reverend Hudson brought more information about St. Agnes' when he and a colleague visited Agnes and Francis again in 1912, saying that they remembered well the Rev. Child and "explaining to us all about you." See: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes and Francis Sapuli to Child, 20 September 1912.

30. See for example: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 15 March 1898; UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 22 October 1899; and UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, All Saints Day, 1911.
31. *"Habari gani siku hizi huko Ulaya?"* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 18 November 1900.
32. *"Tena nisalimie sana sana, rafiki yangu Elspeth Holland na Violet McIntyre, waambie sikuwa na nafasi kuwaandika labda safari nyingine."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Ajanjeuli to Child, 15 March 1898.
33. *"Tena waambie Agnes Piercy na Ada White, Ellen, Patrick na Maude Scott ahsante sana kwa zawadi yao nimemwandikia barua Agnes Piercy kubwa kidogo natumaini atawaarifu wenzake."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 22 October 1899.
34. *"Tena sala yao nataka sana wanikumbuke daima kama nami niwakumbukavyo daima."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 22 October 1899.
35. *"Kweli ninafurahi sana kuona kama mnazidi kunikumbuka na kuniombea kwa Bwana Muungu wetu. Kathalika nami sina buddi kuwakumbukeni katika sala zangu dayima."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: Letter from Agnes to "Wapenzi," 17 November 1899.
36. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: AF, Letter from Francis Sapuli to "My dear Father," 16 October 1919.
37. *"Natamani sana kama heri tungeonana katika ulimwengu huu uso kwa uso, lakini haiwezikani tumaini langu ndio tutaonana mbinguni, tutakapokutana mbele ya Baba yetu atupendae dayima. Lakini sasa twaonana kwa imani ndio katika sala zetu."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 14 March 1899.
38. *"Nataka sana kuwaoneni nyote. Lakini siwezi tunaonana kwa Imani katika sala zetu. Tutaonana mbinguni. Karatasi hii ndio karatasi mlionipelekea katika hii Writing Case yenu mlionipelekea. Muungu atulinde sote akatubariki tupate kukutana katika furaha ile kubwa kule mbinguni."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to "Wapenzi," 17 November 1899.
39. *"… yanakumbusha killa siku rafiki zangu wa St. Agnes."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 17 October 1901. For other references to the photographs displayed in the Sapuli's home, see: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F, A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 2 February 1907; and Letter from Agnes to Child.
40. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Postcard from S.M. Elliott to Child, 28 November 1912.
41. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Francis Sapuli to Child, 16 October 1919.
42. *"Natumaini kama barua hii mtaipata kabla ya Xmas au karibu na Xmas."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Agnes Achitinao to "Wapenzi," 17 November 1899.
43. *"Mwambie Miss Clara Garnett kama salaam nitamwandikia barua mail ya pili leo nina haraka sana kwani kesho ni Post huko Masasi na hapa petu ni mbali kidogo na Masasi."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 9 November 1907. Russell and Pollock estimated that it would have taken someone four or five hours to walk from the Mwiti station, where Agnes lived from 1900 until 1910, to Masasi. See: Russell and Pollock, *News from Masasi*, 56.
44. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)A: Letter from Steere to Polly, 17 January 1865; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)B: Letter from Steere to Polly, 19 October 1872; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(IV)A: Letter from Allen to Heanley, 18 July 1877; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(I)A: Letter from Tozer to Steere, 17 February 1871; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)A: Letter from Steere to Heanley, 3 April 1880; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III): Letter from Steere to

Penney, 16 November 1881; and UMCA Box List A-F: A1(VI)A: Letter from Thackeray to Leeke, 26 September 1887.

45. BDL: "Home Jottings," *Central Africa*, no. 91 (July 1890): 122.
46. See for instance: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(IX-XI): Letter from Maples to Bishop, 1887.
47. Zanzibar National Archives (ZNA): AA2-47: Letter from Halliday to Euan-Smith, 31 August 1888
48. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(VI)A: Letter from Porter to Child, 30 July 1889.
49. ZNA: AA12-8: "Correspondence Compilation," March 1862.
50. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)A: Letter from Steere to Polly, 17 January 1865. See also: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(I)A: Letter from Tozer, 21 May 1866; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(VI)B: Letter from Bennett to Travers, 31 October 1889; UMCA Box List A-F: A1(I)A: Small booklet, annual report for 1871–72, 6; and UMCA Box List A-F: A1(I)A: Letter from Tozer to Steere, 21 March 1871.
51. See: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: D8(2): Bishop Steere's Diary, Friday April 28; and UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)C: Letter from Pennell to Steere, July 26, No year.
52. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A1(III)B: Letter from Steere to Polly, 19 October 1872.
53. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5: Letter from Majaliwa to Child, 22 August 1895.
54. *"Sikuweza kuwaambieni kwa maana harusi ilikuwa ya ghafula, kwa maana kulikuwa na mtu mmoja alikuwa akizuia mimi nisiolewe na huyu mume wangu."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to "Mpenzi," January 1901.
55. Ibid.
56. See for instance: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to "Mpenzi," January 1901; UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 25 February 1903; and UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 28 February 1905.
57. *"Na maisha ya Wakristu pande hizi ni ya hatari sana kwa sababu katika kijiji kimoja watakuwapo Wakristu wawili au watatu, lakini wengi ni Washenzi tu, bassi mara nyingi wale Wakristu waliopo pale tunapata habari kama kaacha Kikristu … "* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, 25 February 1903.
58. *"Bassi hatta sasa twahitaji msaada kwenu ndio SALA zenu pasipo sala zenu sisi hatuna nguvu ya kufanya kazi hii kubwa kwa sababu Washenzi wengi bado kukubali Neno la Muungu … "* Ibid.
59. See: BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 25 February 1903; and UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 23 February 1908.
60. Evangelical Christians were not the only religious community to wrestle with the effects of late-nineteenth century technological and political changes on their spiritual practice. Within the global Muslim community, for instance, there were debates about whether it was permissible to use the telegraph to announce the sighting of a new moon, and thus the end of the Ramadan fast. See: Ogle, *Global Transformation*, 14 and "Chapter 6: Islamic Calendar Times," 149–76.
61. *"Lakini ninaye Baba mmoja Mbinguni ndie Muungu."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 22 October 1899.
62. BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Sapuli to Child, All Saints Day, 1911.
63. *"… sasa anajua kusoma na kuandika na kushona kidogo."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes and Francis Sapuli to Child, 20 September 1912.
64. Ibid.
65. "*Nataka kupata barua zenu na mimi barua hii ndio ya kwanza kwenu nimeandika kwa mkono wangu.*" BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Rose Annie Sapuli to "Watoto wa St. Agnes," 13 April 1913.
66. *"Mungu ndie aliyenipa na imempendeza kuwachukua kwake tena."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 14 September 1909.
67. *"… utamwona katika Photo nimemshika mikononi bassi amefariki, bassi huzuni yangu inazidi tu mwaka huu ni mtu wa huzuni sana."* BDL: UMCA Box List A-F: A5, Letter from Agnes to Child, 30 August 1908.

68. BDL: "Education in Nyasaland, by Augusta M. Smith," *Central Africa*, no. 483 (March 1923): 48.
69. BDL: "Canon Broomfield's Speech on Education," *Central Africa*, no. 535 (July 1927): 152.
70. For the pre-WWI pessimism of Bishop Frank Weston,, see: Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, 88–9. See also: Wilson, *History*, 158–9; and Blood, *History*, 112.
71. Stoner-Eby, "African Leaders Engage Mission Christianity," 254, and Table 4.3 on 255.
72. Ibid., 264.
73. Biersteker, *Kujibizana*, 11.
74. Eustace et al., "AHR Conversation," 1487.
75. See: Prichard, *Sisters in Spirit*, 4; Prichard, "'Pool of Love'"; Hunt, "The Affective, the Intellectual, and Gender History"; McMahon, "'Marrying beneath Herself'"; and Cole and Thomas, *Love in Africa*. See also Vaughan, "The History of Romantic Love," 1–23.

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