

# *On Circulation*

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School of High Studies in Language and Society:  
Mobility at Large

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# Approaches to the study of circulation and “globalization”

- David Harvey: globalization as “flexible accumulation”
- Arjun Appadurai on global flow” and –scapes (eg., media-scapes) and the indigenization of globalization
- Critical views of globalization as the extension and deepening of local and global inequalities—mobilities and immobilities (Z. Bauman & Robertson)
- Aihwa Ong & Saskia Sassen: global assemblages
- Anna Tsing on “friction”—the global as movement shaped by difference, grooves and channels

# Beyond approaches to the study of “globalization”

- **“Globalization” as a central concept invites**
  - Totalizing
  - Reification
  - “The fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Alfred North Whitehead)
- **Better to think in terms of more “middle range” concepts that document “aspirations to the universal” (Tsing) rather than universals**
- **Contingent, emergent processes**

# George Yudice

## *The Expediency of Culture, 2004*

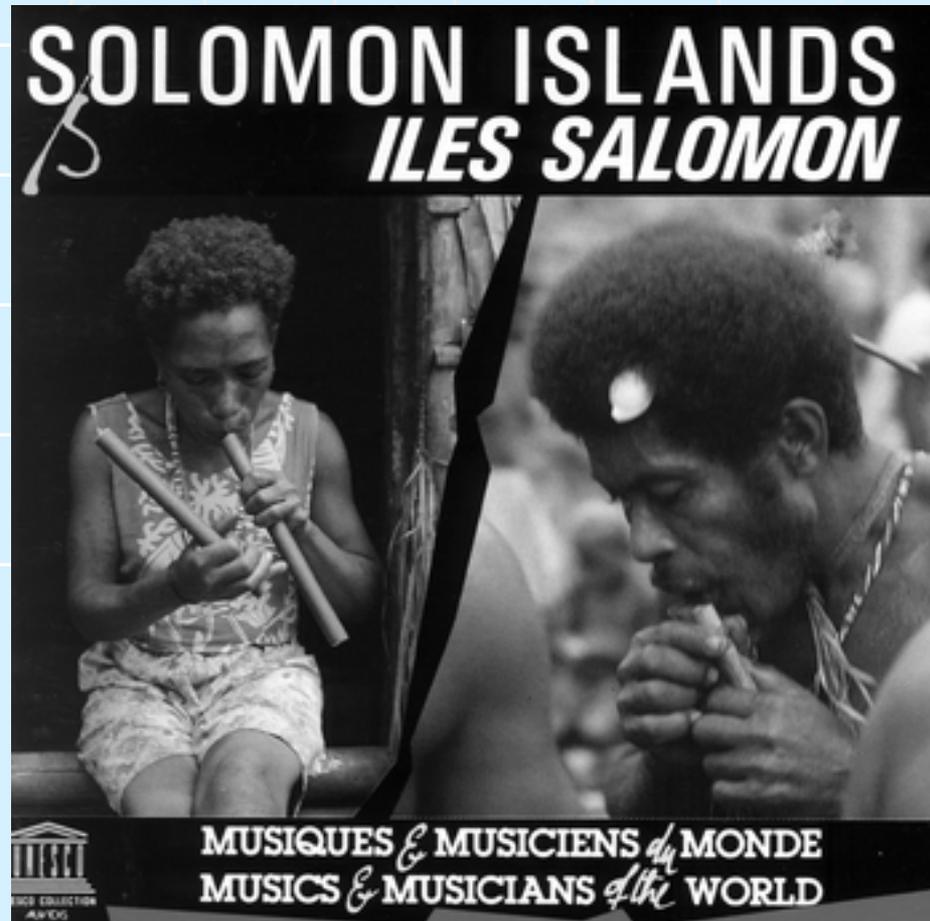
- Key research site: “funk” in Rio
- All cultural forms are now:
  - commodified
  - part of a global market
  - valued in monetary terms
- Social movements and socially/economically disadvantaged communities: only possible effective form of resistance is to demand a piece of the action

# Steven Feld

2000. Sweet Lullaby for World Music. *Public Culture* 12:145-71.



# Rorogwela Lullaby: as ethnomusicology



# Communicable models in Feld's argument

- **Ethnomusicological communicability**
  - A musical form circulates in the Solomon Islands
  - Rorogwela's performance is recorded by ethnomusicologist Hugo Zemp
  - Press into a UNESCO LP
  - Circulates as ethnomusicological documentation
- **World music communicability**
  - Digital sampling
  - Origins erased or misplace (African "pigmy" melody)
  - Circulation = appropriation
  - Logic of capital, of the market

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Subjectification: projecting particular types of subject-positions and subjectivities**
  - **Rorogwela as authentic musical subject**
  - **Ethnomusicologist**
  - **Commercial artists**
  - **Mass audiences/consumers**
  - **Record companies**

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Spatializing practices: projecting sites of production, circulation, and reception of discourse**
  - **Solomon Islands: Point (D&G) of origin**
  - **Scholarly trajectories of fieldwork**
  - **UNESCO**
  - **Deterritorialization of digital sampling & performances, accompanied by distorted, represented reterritorialization (African "pigmy" music)**
  - **Circulation of "world musics" through production, marketing, consumption, recontextualization (new samplings, performances, recordings)**

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Temporalization: projecting the speed and forms of contemporaneity and displacement**
  - **Temporalities of traditional performance (existing apart from colonialism, modernity)**
  - **Scholarly temporalities: producing an archive and its slow circulation (an LP!)**
  - **Time sliced, spliced, repositioned in digital sampling (the old cut into the new)**
  - **Temporalities of marketing and consumption (subsequent from CDs to downloading)**

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Objectification: How are particular entities objectified as the objects of circulation?**
  - **No objectification in the Solomon Islands**
  - **Scholarly objectification in ethnomusicological recording, archivization, and circulation—not commodified**
  - **Transformation into a commodity, value structured by capital**
  - **Commodity-cultural fetishization through consumption**

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- Communicable affects: how do communicable models create and differentially position affects?
  - Politics of empathy with Rorogwela
    - The affective power of authenticity
    - Victim of a global rip-off
  - Commercial musicians, their corporate sponsors and legal defenders: the politics of outrage
  - The role of the scholar?

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Ethics: how do cartographies of communicability project ethical positions?**
  - **Rorogwela and her descendents: ethical ground zero, for calculation of other ethical stances**
  - **Hugo Zemp: ethical neutrality**
  - **Deep Forest and kin: ethical violators**
  - **World music audiences: ethical dupes**
  - **And the scholar?**

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- Scales: how do communicable models constructs scales and modes of crossing them?
  - Rorogwela as the local
  - Hugo Zemp scholarly up-scaling
  - Deep Forest and kin: uncontrolled up-scaling
  - The scholar: the only one who can see all scales and cross them without catching on fire

# Performative dimensions of communicable models

- **Technologies: how do communicable models constructs technologies of circulation?**
  - **Music in the Solomon Islands as pretechnological**
  - **Classical technologies of ethnomusicological documentation, archiving, and reproduction**
  - **Digital technologies of appropriation, dissection, and reassemblage**
  - **Mass technologies of capitalist circulation**

# Some questions we might ask....

- Who gets to map subjectivities, spaces, times, objects, affects, and ethics?
- How do particular cartographies get naturalized?
- To what extent are these dimensions constructed individually by scholars or collectively?
- What are the stakes of making these communicable cartographies?