Daphnée Chauvette December 17th, 2020

**Discussion questions week 11**

1. Describe how sound (music and ‘noise’) is a force and travels through the body. How does this relate to the vibrations that Tina Campt described in listening to images?

Music and noise create “waves and vibrations across the skin, bone, hair and muscle” (Gunaratnam, 2015, 82). The vibrations connect to the vibrations heard in Campt’s hearing and listening to the pictures and how the “hum” reverberated to her (Campt, 2017, 23). When it gets to the ear, music “gives a disembodied and dematerialised body to the most spiritual entities” (Gunaratnam, 2015, 82). Moreover, according to Ching Kung, hearing and touching would “come down to a ‘single physical parameter – force’. To hear is to be touched and to receive” (Gunaratnam, 2015, 82). Just as the pictures resonate when listening to them (Campt, 2017, 23); music, noise – hearing and touching “resonate with the ambient and sublime presence of others and the world around us” (Gunaratnam, 2015, 82). Here we understand how both music and noise can create discomfort since ears cannot be ‘turned off’ per se. We do not have the choice to hear, and the relation between the mouth and the ears translate in the fact that “when another’s sound knocks around the body, the artifice of human boundedness and self-possession dissolves. We are forced to feel our interdependence, our inescapable susceptibility to others (Gunaratnam, 2015, 88). The discomfort can also be felt while listening to pictures, as Campt mentions, “the experience of the photographs as ‘fulsome’, ‘expressive’, ‘restless’, ‘awkward’, ‘unsettling’”(Campt, 2017, 18).

2. What is the role of music/sound in dying and grieving? Discuss the practices of music thanatology and lamentation. Why is lamentation associated with women?

The role of music/sound in dying and grieving changes greatly from one culture to another and over time. Thanatology comes from an administered care to accompany the death that monks used to perpetrate with the use of music and song. Indeed, “the acoustic anointing of dying people with live music at the bedside […] is said to weave ‘tonal substance responsorially over, around, and above the physical body of the patient, from head to toe’” (Gunaratnam 2015, 81). When encouraged and practiced, lamentation is said to be a “formal genre intended to arouse an emotional response in the listener” (Gunaratnam, 2015, 83). Lamentation usually “marked personal loss, […] express a community’s cosmology, its injustices and grief (Gunaratnam, 2015, 83). It was usually a task reserved to women as women are mostly associated with emotions. Not only to that, but also to the practice of care, such as the profession of nurse.

**References**

Campt, Tina (2017) ‘Quiet soundings: the grammar of black futurity’, In *Listening to Images,* Durham: Duke University Press.

Gunaratnam, Yasmin (2013) ‘Music’, in *Death and the Migrant: Bodies, Borders and Care*, pp. 81-98, London: Bloomsbury.