Unknown pleasures: a multi-sited sensory ethnography in Electronic Dance Music clubs

Enrico Petrilli
PhD candidate
Department of Sociology and Social Research
University of Milan-Bicocca
My research: A carnal sociology of clubbing

18 months multi-sited sensory ethnography in Electronic Dance Music clubs conducted both in Milan and Berlin.

The attempt is to develop a reflection able to overtake the lack of academic discourses about pleasure, given that all the activities done at EDM parties - listening music, dancing, having fun with friends, meeting new people, drinking and taking drugs - are directly linked to carnal and abstract pleasures.
I. Ontological level - *How to define pleasure!*?

**Historical grounding**

Enlightenment’s validation of pleasure

*Individual pleasure as a social project*

Freud = **reality principle > pleasure principle**

*individual wellbeing vs civilization goals*
I. Ontological level - *How to define pleasure!*?

**Sociological debate**

**Bauman**'s liquid society and homo eligens (1999)

*make Freud great again*

**Featherstone**’s calculated hedonism (1991)

*rational calculation in emotional experiences*

**Sassatelli**’s tamed hedonism (2001)

*social regulation of pleasure*
I. Ontological level - *How to define pleasure!?*

**Immanent pleasure**

**Foucault**’s pragmatics of pleasure (1975)

*sex-desire VS bodies and pleasures*

**Preciado**’s pharmacopornographic regime (2008)

*economy of excitation-frustration value*
II. Epistemological level - *How to approach pleasure!*?

*Cartesian epistemology*

*Science neglects pleasure* (Bunton & Coveney, 2011)

mind > body

Es. sociology of the body

rational/textual > pre-reflective/non-linguistic

concept/meaning > emotion/sensation
II. Epistemological level - *How to approach pleasure!*?

*Post-Cartesian epistemology*

Carnal sociology (Crossley 1994; Wacquant, 2005)

Merleau-Ponty’s **body-subject**

More-than-representational theory (Lorimer, 2005)
III. Methodological level - *How to study pleasure!?*  
**Visceral method**

Sensory participation

*researcher's body*

The body mapping technique

Metaphors

Poems