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Ecstasy Reinvented: neo-Maenads

“Please Don’t Stop the Music”

*It's gettin' late  
I'm making my way over to my favorite place  
I gotta get my body moving shake the stress away  
I wasn't looking for nobody when you looked my way  
Possible candidate*

*Who knew  
That you'd be up in here lookin like you do  
You're makin' stayin' over here impossible  
Baby I must say your aura is incredible  
If you don't have to go don't*

*Do you know what you started  
I just came here to party  
But now we're rockin' on the dance floor  
Acting naughty  
Your hands around my waist  
Just let the music play  
We're hand in hand  
Chest to chest  
And now we're face to face*

*I wanna take you away  
Lets escape into the music  
DJ let it play  
I just can't refuse it  
Like the way you do this  
Keep on rockin' to it  
Please don't stop the  
Please don't stop the music*

*Baby are you ready cause its getting close  
Don't you feel the passion ready to explode  
What goes on between us no one has to know  
This is a private show, oh (Rihanna)*

Nightclubs have a bad reputation. They are often viewed as meat markets of overly excited people and cesspools of drunkards and drugs (Goulding 759). Generally, nightclubs can be shut down for underage sales of alcohol, serving after hours, improper liquor licenses, fire safety code violations, and a number of vice offenses, including prostitution. Spilling out onto the street in the early morning hours, often in residential neighborhoods, reckless behavior is displayed and may lead to other consequences. What may be escapism for some, others view as a breeding ground for lewd acts. Improving conditions surrounding this form of adult entertainment is a challenge even after 100 years of existence.

Can the quality of social life be improved and preserved at the notorious New York City Cheetah club or is it doomed by the new generation of wannabe gangsters, misfits, and copycat thugs ushering in a wave of prostitution, drug selling, robbery, and the occasional shoot out threatening the nightclub's reputation. I visited the club recently and got a chance to speak with the General Manager and part owner, Mark Mitchell ("Mitch"). Walking into the Cheetah club I was captivated by the atmosphere, as if I were dropped into this world from the sky. The plush cheetah print booths surrounded the huge dance floor while two mini stages on either side were reserved for the Cheetah go-go dancers who welcomed me into this preternaturally pleasurable spectacle (Noble 34). A larger stage is somewhat of an island in between the two others and connects to the VIP section. The suede walls were crisp further texturizing the room offering no official beginning or ending to the space. The adjacent bars on the main floor are stockpiled with the most popular liquors. It's no wonder the lines outside are stretching to the east and west of the huge black tinted glass doors.

*“Dance is an art, Dance with your heart”* (Clary).

The majority of Cheetah’s partygoers consume alcohol seeking a slight disorientation to disassociate them from reality. Club Cheetah provides an illusory environment where it is perfectly acceptable to behave in accordance with the taboos of this world. This metamorphosis is not scrutinized or susceptible to society’s judgment once inside these walls. However, for various reasons, as with anything else there is a point of no return. Throughout my interview with Mitch he recognized the snags that could potentially ruin his club and career. Yet, he had a sense of pride as he acknowledged strange events amongst the patrons and the staff. His stories lent themselves to my research and were confirmed by my first hand account.

Drugs “somehow” get by security and before long I was asked for a bump. Apparently, a bump is a hit of cocaine in each nostril that sells for approximately \$50 at Cheetah. If that’s not the drug of choice for the evening, XTC (Ecstasy) pills are readily available. These happy pills sell for approximately \$30. Another drug that is available whether preferred or not is a Ruffi, also known as the date rape drug. Most often slipped into a female’s drink, this drug typically disorients a person and eventually leads to loss of body control. If not careful, a planned journey through paradise could be the last.

Eighteen year old Jennifer Moore was ready to dance at the Guesthouse nightclub she frequented during the summer of 2006. Fortunately, she and her girlfriend walked in without being carded because her friend was not carrying her fake I.D. that night. From experience, they were “too pretty to be asked” (Montefinise 012). Once inside, they ordered their own drinks before attracting two men who kept them hydrated for the

remainder of their stay. The drinking and dancing was over once they realized their new friends were a bit eager and behaving very forward.

Outside the club, they quickly realized their car had been towed and took a cab to the tow pound on 38<sup>th</sup> Street and the West Side Highway. Once there, they admitted to each other that they felt very strange. Authorities at the tow pound refused to release the car to either girl claiming both were too drunk. In her stupor, Moore's friend called the police, but then passed out. Moore left the scene because she did not want to deal with the cops. She contacted her friend twice soon after leaving explaining that she was nearby but didn't know exactly where. She had met a nice man who offered to help her get back home (Montefinise 012). Her body was found in a dumpster in New Jersey two days later. She had been raped and strangled.

I got to speak to one of the Cheetah bartenders who had a more fortunate ending to a similar story. *"He must've slipped me a Mickey and I'm a bartender, I couldn't have been more careful."* Venus was hanging out at Cheetah on her night off chatting it up with a patron. The two seemed to be enjoying each other's company. He introduced her to several of his friends who were partying in the VIP section. She remembers laughing and having a good time. She never felt threatened because she was familiar with the scene.

After one and a half drinks Venus could not stand. Her new friend offered to take her home, but she was not well enough to walk out of the club. So he takes a seat with her on his lap and begins to touch her inappropriately. Finally, a coworker noticed her condition and suggested she take over her care. The guy arguably refused her help, insisting he take Venus home, as she had requested. Eventually, he walked away

defeated. Venus describes how she was aware of everything going on around her. She could hear everything and could feel his hands traveling throughout her body, but she could do nothing except remain slumped over him.

Not only is sex taken or given away, it is sold at Cheetah. Intoxication eliminates rational thinking. Sex acts are bought, sold, and cleverly take place in the restrooms. Though sex and drugs at Cheetah are the result of irresponsible behavior, assault is almost always no-fault. When weapons are smuggled in, someone is definitely looking for trouble. Involving innocent people just to make a public statement is a cowardly act.

Even with bouncers searching purses, waistlines and bra lines, guns make their way inside the club. I was surprised to learn from Mitch that a young man was shot in the knee and stomach while dancing in the middle of the dance floor. *“No one even noticed he was shot until he was spread across the floor in a puddle of blood.”* It was rumored that someone from the security team was paid off to get the gun in. While this was most likely a personal vendetta, robbery is another reason for assault at Cheetah. One bouncer was associated with a neighborhood gang and would tip off his fellow gang members when someone entered the club with flashy jewelry.

Unfortunately, the staff of this or any other nightclub cannot be trusted. In August 2008 a patron of a popular midtown nightclub was bludgeoned to death by a bar back. Though he pleaded guilty, no one really knows the motive for him murdering her and stuffing her into a maintenance closet (Murder). In February 2006 Imette St. Guillen was murdered by a bouncer providing security at the club she was partying at (Cardwell). Tragic events have tarnished the nightclub reputation and conceal the purpose of its very existence.

*“Yet there I venture. There I go to replenish my emptiness, to stretch my nights and fill them fuller and fuller with dreams. And for a second even now, even here, I reach my object and say, ‘Wander no more. All else is trial and make-believe. Here is the end.’...”* (Woolf 130).

Some may argue that the quality of social life at Club Cheetah does not need improvement. Club Cheetah has a “normal” atmosphere. Eliminating the drugs and sex would be like removing the spices of a meal. Adults should have the option to party any which way they like. Club Cheetah offers a gathering place for those who want to take a walk on the wild side, if only for one night. It is fair to say that tragic events occur everywhere, including nightclubs.

Ironically, nightclubs began as a form of rebellion during the Prohibition era. They proclaimed a matter of personal choice and desire. In America, the origin of this pastime dates back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when underground clubs combined illicit drinking and lively music. Around World War II, nightclubs began promoting music bands and musicians, and introducing new dances. At a time when segregation dominated every aspect of American culture, nightclubs helped foster integration, beginning with interracial contests and observation.

Music styles meshed and new music genres were born. Soon the entertainment rosters of nightclubs changed from big swing bands to a variety of acts, including the early forms of bebop, rhythm & blues, and rock (Erenberg). Catering to this new phenomenon was the beginning of a transformation which would include smaller stages, larger dance floors, and disc jockey booths to provide continuous music. Today, nightclubs are a form of late night entertainment for adults which mainly consists of food, drinks, and recorded music for dancing. The explosion of the music industry removed the nightclub stigma. They became favorites for politicians, professionals, and

celebrities. Hamilton Jordan, Jimmy Carter's White House chief of staff frequented Studio 54 (Noble 34), just as Mariah Carey and Derek Jeter periodically attend Cheetah.

New York City's Cheetah club is a vibrant, hip dance club attracting a 21 to 35 year old age group. Clientele includes residents of the five boroughs and beyond. With special guest disc jockeys, it is no surprise that celebrity sightings are the norm. Since opening its doors in 1997, it has effectively outlived its competitors. Even as the years brought about different trends, Cheetah has managed to cater to different crowds. Theme nights showcase a particular type of music that target specific groups of people.

*“Immeasurably receptive, holding everything, trembling with fullness, yet clear, contained – so my being seems, now that desire urges it no more out and away; now that curiosity no longer dyes it a thousand colours. It lies deep, tideless, immune.....”* (Woolf 291).

Virginia Woolf describes the youth I refer to who attend the Cheetah Club. Initially, they are vibrant and daring, ignorant of future concerns because they can't see far ahead. Unbeknownst at the moment their actions are shaping their individuality. In maturity, wild times will become foggy memories and ironically the basis for their eventual being as adults. Unfortunately, preliminary evidence suggests that the youth users of “club” drugs are at risk for cardio- and cerebrovascular toxicity (Cole et al.). Drug use is psychologically and physically damaging the future generation of leaders, and is prevalent amongst young adults usually being initiated during adolescence with Marijuana (Parsons et al.).

“Club” drugs are usually introduced during the early twenties. “Club” drugs are Ecstasy, GHB, ketamine, crystal methamphetamine, cocaine, and LSD. Based on empirical research, these drugs impair cognitive ability and motor functioning. *Cognitive ability (in medicine) – relating to the process of acquiring knowledge by using reasoning,*

*intuition, or perception. Motor function (in medicine) – the ability to produce body movement by complex interaction of the brain, nerves, and muscles.* In a 2005 study of 143 Ecstasy users, 87% reported prescription drug use as well (Kurtz et al.). A study was also performed on a sample of young adults age 18-25 measuring “club” drug use within the past six months. Specifically, the study examined if there were differences in the rate of club drug use by gender and sexual orientation, dance club and non-dance club venues.

Researchers were able to assess the number of beginner users among male and female, gay, lesbian, and heterosexual young adults. By surveying club drug use and studying the results, proper intervention can be directed to each target group. The method involved anonymous surveys over a four-week span. Diverse samples were used and a frightening new trend was revealed: the escalation of club drug use by young adults. The surveys were dealt to participants in dance club and non-dance club venues. The social settings were coffee houses and campus “hangouts” in New York City.

Results of the study serve as an indication that intervention is needed among young adults since 40% have initiated use within the last six months. Drug use within this community has risen and continues to rise. Emergency room visits confirm this conclusion. Since 1995, the number of visits associated with club drug use has increased dramatically (i.e., 421 Ecstasy users in 1995; 1,143 users in 1998; and 4,026 users in 2002) (Parsons et al.). Club drug use is equally popular amongst male and females, gay/bisexual and heterosexual young adults, but more prevalent in a nightclub.

London’s Sam’s Club also defines itself as a part of mainstream youth culture as opposed to a subculture. As a contemporary element within the work/leisure cycle, this “wild zone” serves as an escape from the pressures of daily life where people



ritualistically congregate (Sanders). Ecstasy dominates the drug culture at Sam's Club although other drugs are used. In fact, Ecstasy is socially acceptable and is directly/indirectly encouraged by the patrons, D.J., and management. Fashion, psychedelic club displays, music lyrics, and the drug's availability at the club have "normalized" the drug. This feel good drug is widely accepted and the associated behavior is tolerated because it generates business for the club. The atmosphere (i.e., flashing lights and thumping dance music) is conducive to the effects of ecstasy. Management turns a blind eye and bouncers are instructed to not let it get too out of control.

Dionysian qualities describe today's clubheads. They resemble the maenads who engaged in riotous dancing (revved up by wild, uncontrollable emotion), orgiastic rites, and drunkenness. An attempt was made to make a correlation with homosexuality to explain their separation from the larger heterosexual world (Plessas). But the Dionysian qualities such as liberation, dance, sex, drunkenness, and ecstasy describe a typical Cheetah Club patron. Dionysus is the god of wine, ritual madness, and ecstasy in Greek mythology, and represents libido and gratification.

The only Greek god to have a mortal parent and have been "twice-mothered," Dionysus was born from his father's thigh when his mother was consumed by lightning. Zeus rescued his unborn child from his mistress's ashes and sewed him into his thigh. When he was born he turned him over to the nymphs of Mount Nysa. Raised by nymphs, the creator of wine traveled teaching the art of winemaking. His followers, mainly women, worshipped him through music, dance, drinking, and flesh eating, and attempted to merge their identity with nature (Hopkins).



### **DIONYSUS – Nude, Adorned with Grapevine, Holding a Goblet**

Seeking a catharsis has been practiced since the beginning of time as is evidenced in Greek mythology when Dionysus liberated his people through wine and ecstatic frenzy. I questioned the written/unwritten rules of our society. Nightclubs are either frowned upon or glorified by our culture? In a society where stress is unavoidable, daily lives consist of hard work, injustice, and best efforts are met with obstacles that can easily transform the kindest of spirits. It is safe to assume that everyone needs an outlet to release their demons. What deems a catharsis appropriate? Doesn't everyone need to unwind and "take a break from themselves" and society? To what degree of fun and "letting go" is appropriate?

*"Oppose ourselves to this illimitable chaos, this formless imbecility. Making love to a nursemaid behind a tree, that soldier is more admirable than all the stars. Yet sometimes one trembling star comes in the clear sky and makes me think the world beautiful and we maggots deforming even the trees with our lust" (Woolf 226).*

To learn about acceptable behavior within a culture is to learn about the values the people hold. Acceptable rules of behavior are referred to as norms. The degrees to which the norms are violated are labeled as folkways (least offensive) and taboos (most offensive). Negative sanctions range from stares to ostracism. In fact, norms become so stifling that *moral holidays* are designated as a way to be relieved from these pressures. An example of such a holiday in the United States would be Mardi Gras, where public drunkenness and some nudity is accepted throughout the duration of the festivities, when they would otherwise be punished. Even with moral holidays and moral holiday places, our society will not allow the practices of moral holidays as a way of life.

Nightclubs in New York City participate in this moral break, serving as safety valves, allowing a release of deviance (Henslin 50). Bars and nightclubs are key risk factors for violence during these moral holidays (Hughes et al., "Predictors"). This is a place where people can let their hair down, let their skin show, and behave in accordance with a different set of norms. The forbidden fruit is so desired. This night out is savored because come morning it is time to rejoin the rat race. There are bills to pay, appointments to keep, and goals to accomplish. It is time to comply with society.

The topic of morals seems to be the underlying factor in *God Dies by the Nile*. A conversation among the mayor, his wife, and son prove that even though women can behave like men, they would be viewed as immoral because they are unequal to their counterpart. The mayor comments that women have lost all morality as he describes a newborn baby being abandoned by its teenage mother. Though he secretly fathered the child, he sarcastically responds to his wife's suggestion about men no longer having any morals admitting that men have always been immoral.

The mayor slyly adds, *“There’s nothing new to that. Men have always been immoral. But now the women are throwing virtue overboard, and that will lead to a real catastrophe.”* His wife questions him, *“Why a catastrophe? Why not equality, or justice?”* *“No, mother, I don’t agree with you when you talk of equality. Girls are not the same as boys. The most precious thing they possess is their virtue”* (El Saadawi 50-51).

The perception of women is similar by the Nile as it is in nightclubs in New York City. Women are seen as sex objects by the Nile and as sex symbols in the Cheetah nightclub. In *God Dies by the Nile* the young women are taken from their parents’ home against their will, forced to marry older men and succumb to their demands. Upon entering the Cheetah club derrieres in mid-air welcome the crowd as the go-go dancers master the tiny stages. And when everyone starts to feel “nice” it is the women’s services that are sold. Though in the nightclub world, women voluntarily submit themselves to the sexual desires of men, the age old idea remains, women exist to please men.

*“Horns and trumpets ring out. Leaves unfold ... There is a dancing and a drumming, like the dancing and the drumming of naked men with assegais. Like the dance of savages round the camp fire. They are savage; they are ruthless. They dance in a circle ... The flames leap over their painted faces, over the leopard skins ... The flames of the festival rise high. The great procession passes, flinging green boughs and flowering branches. Their horns spill blue smoke... The procession passes. And while it passes ... we are aware of downfalling, we forebode decay. The shadow slants. We who are conspirators, withdrawn together to lean over some cold urn, note how the purple flame flows downwards”* (Woolf 140-41).

It is wrong to have a negative perception of Cheetah because its intent is to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for socialization. In fact, its efforts should be praised because socialization contributes to improved mental health (Nolen-Hoeksem 64). Club Cheetah provides a place for adults to free themselves and in a sense return to

a natural state by surrendering their bodies to the pulsating beats. Here, we come together for a short period of time and when the music stops we are dead again. We are players in the sociological arena.

*All the world's a stage  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts . . .*  
(Shakespeare 2.7)

The sociological perspective stresses that people's social experiences – the groups to which they belong and their experiences within these groups – underlie their behavior (Henslin 33). Sociologist, C. Wright Mills refers to this as the intersection of biography (the individual) and history (social factors that influence the individual). Dr. Henslin takes his readers on a sociological journey consisting of diverse pitstops throughout his textbook, *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*. Originally, from Minnesota, he graduated from colleges in California and Indiana, earning his doctorate degrees in sociology in Missouri while teaching there as well. Dr. Henslin has traveled the world and his first hand observations shine through in his textbook. He continues his teaching career as Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. He remarks how he enjoys seeing the faces of his students light up as they begin to discover the influences of society on their perspective of the world and the effects of society on them.

Dr. Henslin enjoys living in other cultures and witnessing first hand the “sociology principles coming alive.” His travels around the world have been applied in the form of case studies and photographs bringing sociological concepts to life. His primary interests in sociology are the sociology of everyday life, deviance, and

international relations. Deviance, he teaches, refers to any violation of a norm. In contrast with both sociobiologists and psychologists, sociologists consider factors for deviant behavior outside the individual. Not to say that genetics and mental abnormalities do not play some part in deviance, sociologists examine external influences such as subcultures and social class. At the other end of the spectrum deviance clarifies moral boundaries, affirms norms, promotes social unity, and promotes social change.

Dr. Henslin's textbook is dynamic in that it is filled with cross-cultural examples but I do question his take on deviance. He describes how hate crimes are a fairly new classification as a motivating factor in crime, and how new ones are expected. I wonder what kinds are expected given how different groups are gaining access to power. Also, he points out that official crime statistics are based on police discretion but I would venture to argue that this discretion is learned before joining the police academy. The individuals who join the police force, to some extent, maintain their personal biases and beliefs which become primary guides. The academy education may not always influence an officer's decisions for potential arrests. Personal experiences mold the beliefs which influence decisions and ultimately the statistics. Blame should be placed on this symbolic system of criminal profiling.

Social structure and social interaction are contributing factors to behavior. Social structure dictates the manner in which to conduct oneself. It overrides personal feelings and desires. Location in the social structure, not biology, influences differences in behavior. Components of social structure are culture, social class, social status, roles, groups and social institutions. In a nightclub, there are no roles or expectations. Much of socialization is intended to mold human beings into compliant members of society.

Interaction with each other shapes thinking, reasoning, feeling, and ultimately behavior. Social interaction in everyday life includes the designation of personal space, touching, eye contact, and smiling. This designation is altered at a nightclub.

Dr. Henslin explains that, generally, the term culture refers to the language, beliefs, values, norms, and material objects that are passed from one generation to the next. Symbolic culture is a group's ways of thinking and their patterns of behavior. Meanings are attached to symbols such as gestures, language, values, norms, sanctions, folkways, and mores (Henslin 206). Without symbols, there would be no individual thought. The mind is a product of society. Along with the development of the mind and self comes the development of personality.

According to Freud, personality consists of three elements. The id is the pleasure seeking element which everyone is born with. This is the drive that seeks to satisfy basic needs such as food, safety, attention, and sex. The second element, the ego, emerges when the id needs to adapt to the needs of others. The ego balances the id and the superego, the third element of personality. The superego represents the culture within the self which consists of learned morals. The superego is responsible for the guilt and shame felt when social rules are broken, and pride and self-satisfaction when followed. The id is turned up full blast at a nightclub where attention-seeking, sex-driven behavior would otherwise be scolded, it is praised.

Cheetah and the other roughly 250 nightclubs in New York City are met with public resistance. They are not seen as part of good ole American culture. In fact, to some extent are still considered a deviance to society, far removed from the realities of responsibility and respect. Labeled as groupies, the women are dressed tastelessly while

the men are emulating the most popular music artists. “Clubbing,” as described by some, is not a form of entertainment or recreation, it is an excuse to drink and behave foolishly.

*Her body had become one with Him, and she shivered with a ... feeling of relief more like deep pleasure. She wanted to weep, to shriek with joy, to close her eyes and abandon herself to Him, to savour to the end this feeling of relief, of a body no longer under tension, of a deep pleasure she had never experienced before* (El Saadawi 113).

The Cheetah nightclub is an escape to another world, one that provides pleasure and frees us of judgment. My life does not feel threatened though I would like to see some things change. I want to have that ecstatic sensation during my visit, that certain numbness which comes about only when I lose myself in the music. Stirring up that uncontrollable emotion as the Maenads displayed, I believe, can be accomplished through other channels. Society cannot be changed, but this club environment can be recreated in a healthy manner while maintaining the desired core elements of relief, relaxation, escape, fun, and eroticism. Other approaches that are calming to the senses are required. Upon entrance, there will be a huge relaxing waterfall. Lasers, smoke screens, lights, images, and the relaxing waterfalls will work together to produce a more calming effect subconsciously.

A healthy settings approach is ideal to minimize violence, encourage safe sex measures, and reduce noise levels as patrons appear on the streets when the club closes. There will be an availability of natural drinks and healthy hors d’oeuvres at several locations throughout the club. A two-drink maximum would be enforced and the club can make up the profit difference with a higher entrance fee which would include drinks and meals. Nonstop dance music would end at 2 a.m. with one last hour of “socializing” music in which patrons would be able to mingle, speak, and make plans for the rest of the night. This would ensure that patrons leave satisfied and looking forward to revisit.



Small amounts of alcohol consumed during their stay will positively impact moral and sexual behavior. Assault would be lessened dramatically as alcohol plays a large role in violent behavior (Hughes et al., "Alcohol").

The main idea is to protect and promote health. The primary attraction of the "club" drug GHB is the sexual pleasure received during this intoxication (Lee and Levounis). Usually, nightclubs are a place to pick up the next sexual partner, and a study has revealed a pattern of popular nightclubs to be characterized by slick décor and heightened sexuality (Purcell and Graham). Safe sex messages are temporarily forgotten, so having readily accessible condoms is ideal. The restrooms inside Cheetah should not be in a remote location within the club. The men's and women's restroom should be on opposite sides of the club and very well lit.

Instituting the Illicit Drug Anti Proliferation Act of 2003 was an attempt to limit the availability of venues for Ecstasy use. Unfortunately, this law violates economic liberties (Sachdev) to the legitimate venues. At the very least, fear is placed on club owners to operate their club properly. Nightclubs are an important part of nighttime entertainment and their popularity have lead to the opening of many which have assisted the economic development particularly of urban areas, bringing money and employment (Berkley, "Positive"). Attracting large crowds is the goal for Cheetah so violence in and around the club must be anticipated, but can be controlled.

I was fortunate enough to interview Lieutenant Erik Hernandez of the New York City Police Department who explained how policing club scenes in general have become a priority as nightclub crimes have increased. "*We are taking more preventative measures.*" There will be stricter enforcement of Cheetah's fire safety codes, maximum

occupancy, and hours of alcohol sales (NY CLS Al. Bev. Appx. § 48.6), and proper licenses. Policing inside Cheetah will prevent vice offenses (i.e., prostitution) and drug-related crimes and since overdosing inside the club is not unusual, more plain-clothed security will keep watch (Parsons et al. 246). Lt. Hernandez replied that “*safety revolves around security.*”

Security will include metal detectors for staff and patrons. Just as they are suitable for airports they will save lives in these tighter more crowded quarters. Lt. Hernandez emphasized the need for background checks on the staff and after the tragic St. Guillen incident, in 2006 Mayor Bloomberg signed into law the requirement of background checks of security workers at nightclubs (Cardwell). Stricter identification checks will be installed. Mechanisms in which the license/non-license is inserted and checked for authenticity will be used instead of just being eyeballed. Everyone will need I.D. no matter how young, old, or pretty they look, otherwise entry will be denied. Partying and drinking can be catastrophic, especially if underage. Adults can make the decision to come back for their vehicle in the morning, once sober.

Visible police patrol on the premises discourages loitering, littering, vandalism, and violent crimes. Other preventative measures for customer altercations is picking and choosing clientele, hence weeding out intoxicated partygoers or otherwise troublemakers. Selecting customers based on proper attire, behavior on line, mannerisms (Berkley, “Preventing”) is very effective. Other psychosocial skills practiced by the staff shape customer behavior. From the moment patrons arrive, wait on line, walk in the door, and throughout their stay, employees should be cordial and jovial. Wishing them a good time when they walk in will set the atmosphere as good-natured fun.

There should be a response system in place for customer altercations. Response should be fast, involve several security workers, using the least excessive force, and removing participants one at a time from the club. Good recovery gains loyal customers. Providing the “wind-down” time enables arousal levels to reach an acceptably safe point (McNally). Extra amenities will go a long way such as taxi availability, emergency hotel service, and parking lot to leave vehicle if intoxicated. Offering lollipops when exiting the club will reduce noise levels (Bellis, Hughes, and Lowey) as everyone spills on to the street at the end of the night.

Relieving tension requires that the experience be a mesh of relaxation, enjoyment, certain degree of sensuality, and safety. Implementing these steps would improve Cheetah’s nightlife. Mitch’s approach was a bit more passive. He “*wants the public to know that Cheetah is a safe and comfortable atmosphere,*” and prides himself on his managerial style. Though he wants to treat his staff as people first and employees second, certain behavior cannot be tolerated. The staff is supposed to be professional, not flirtatious or taking bribes. When this is less than, there should be harsh punishment, i.e., loss of work hours or complete termination. Unfortunately, it is not the fault of one or the other, patrons and employees must take personal responsibility.

Some would argue that you cannot fix Cheetah’s faults without taking away the fun. Some may argue that drinking can occur before arrival at the club. This is why the “detox” hour at the end of the night with the availability of water will be beneficial. Others will probably question how Ecstasy users will still make it inside the club. At least there will be chill out zones (cooler areas) within the club to keep partygoers feeling refreshed. Some believe nightclubs have spiraled out of control. They protest nightclubs

just as nightclubs were not accepted early on. These people would prefer that clubs revert to their original ways when they were small social gatherings as a way to restore order.

*“Yes, but I still resent the usual order. I will not let myself be made yet to accept the sequence of things. I will walk; I will not change the rhythm of my mind by stopping, by looking; I will walk. I will go up these steps into the gallery and submit myself to the influence of minds like mine outside the sequence”* (Woolf, 155).

Simple reorganization will make a world of difference. The nightclub’s new roster will ensure a pleasurable experience. Different events throughout the club such as circus acts, contests, and brief comedy shows will invite harmony. Although New York City nightclubs have been in the middle of some assaults and other irresponsible behavior and are to some extent negligent, they are not completely out of control. Club Cheetah has proven to provide a quality nightlife service for adults though there is room for improvement. With the methods described, Club Cheetah can take entertainment to another level. The right to party must be in sync with the quality of life. As a revolutionary for this cause, I will continue to advocate this form of entertainment and try anything needed for improvement but *please* don’t stop the music.



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