



NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
CITY TECH
300 JAY STREET • NAMM HALL 322 • BROOKLYN, NY 11201-1909
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Contact: Denise H. Sutton
718.260.5979
Fax 718.260.8553
dsutton@citytech.cuny.edu

Dale Tarnowieski
718.260.5695
Fax 718.260.8553
dtarnowieski@citytech.cuny.edu

City Tech Humanities Journal Complicates the Concept of Intoxication

Brooklyn, NY—June 22, 2016--The new issue of *NANO: New American Notes Online*, City Tech's interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access journal, is now available online. Issue 9, "Intoxication," is the result of a collaboration between guest editors Alexine Fleck and Ingrid Walker, the article authors, the interviewees, and *NANO*'s editorial team: Sean Scanlan, Ruth Garcia, and Rebecca Devers.

Intoxication has long held an uncomfortable position in US culture: An overwhelming number of people reach for this state of mind, and entire industries compete to support it. Most academic literature on intoxication references substance abuse, addiction, violence, incarceration, and death; however, Issue 9 explores intoxication as a particularly complex concept and condition.

For instance, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band played two sold-out shows at Barclays Center in 2016. It is probably safe to say, since this was a popular rock music concert, that some in attendance were sober, some were intoxicated, and many audience members were somewhere in between these two states of consciousness. From a conceptual standpoint, were those intoxicated people drunk on music or alcohol or something else? From a legal or psychological standpoint, were these intoxicated people harming themselves, were they addicts or worse?

Guest editors Fleck and Walker question common perceptions of intoxication in their introduction:

What is often lost in scholarly discussions of intoxication is a recognition of "user agency," the rational ability to choose that state of being along with the reasons one might want to make that choice. In this sense, intoxication offers a tantalizing paradox: what looks like chaos, insanity, or simply a waste of time from the outside can feel like order, transcendence, or inspiration from the inside.

Intoxication can be euphoric and expansive. It can also be chaotic and incoherent. At times, intoxication is joyful or silly; at others, it is downright angry or greedy. The challenge of describing this transitory condition underscores its complexity. Even the etymological origins of the term reflect a blurred boundary between elixir and poison. As Joseph Gabriel points out in the Afterword to this issue, intoxication risks (and promises) an obliteration of the self—if only temporarily. It exceeds its own containment, as reflected in terms like getting "trashed" or "wasted." Terms like these indicate a deeply ingrained assumption that intoxication is garbage to be thrown away. However, perhaps what is to be found in the unstable temporality of intoxication is neither disposable nor wasteful. The essays in this issue of *NANO: New American Notes Online* presume that there is treasure to be found if one just digs a bit through the trash of wasted time.

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City Tech, of The City University of New York, is the largest four-year public college of technology in the Northeast and a national model for technological education. City Tech has an enrollment of more than 17,000 students in 25 baccalaureate and 27 associate degree programs and was recently ranked number one in the nation in producing the highest paid associate degree-earning graduates (<http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report/2-year-colleges#fullText>). For more information, visit www.citytech.cuny.edu.

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