Reader,

Thank you for considering our fifteenth issue of MiNT Magazine. This spring has been an exciting one for MiNT. Currently, we are working on our website (www.geneseo.edu/~mint), we are distributing a hopefully biweekly bulletin and, as always, we are providing the most dynamic Geneseo campus magazine to hundreds of students. Inside this issue you will find two serial cartoons that will be continued in future issues. You will find a refreshingly new view of the Beatles, inspired poetry, and carefully crafted essays.

At times our continued growth causes oversights, and in our fourteenth edition we unfortunately printed only half of Nate Northrop’s Being Tremendous. This was a mistake on our part and to present you with the full, true version of the piece we have reprinted it here in its revised and original length. I encourage you to reflect on it.

For this issue you will notice the peculiar cover art—this picture was chosen by the student body of Geneseo over the span of one week in the college Union. Students voted on the picture with their spare change, I am happy to say that the program was a huge success. Thank you all who participated, enjoy your cover! Our projects would not have been successful were it not for efforts of people outside of MiNT, particularly Joe Martin who continues to provide creative artwork for MiNT and Mary Rosch who provides countless ideas.

Finally, it will be with great sadness that at the end of this semester, the seniors of MiNT Magazine will be taking their leave. These seniors include: Meghan Gleason, our Managing Editor, Ann Nicodemi and Nate Northrop, our assistant editors, Casey Carrigan, the Chosen One, and Sara Germain, our former Editor-in-Chief. They all have contributed much to MiNT, and we wish them well.

With that I hope you thoroughly enjoy this most recent issue of MiNT—there’s more to be had!

William Sankey
Editor-in-Chief

Hey, think we have it all wrong, all right? Get your opinion printed in the next MiNT!

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http://www.geneseo.edu/~mint

MiNT Magazine is funded by the Student Association and grants from private sponsors.
I hate the Beatles.
And I’m not just saying that to rile people up. I hate rocking the boat. Nor am I saying that to defy convention. I love convention. I love conformity! I’m saying it because I mean it. I hate the Beatles.

It’s a matter of taste really, or as some people might say, a lack of taste. Whatever it is, I simply don’t like their music. To double-check, I listened to their 1967 album, Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Suspicions confirmed. Their voices are irritating, whiny and grating. Their beats are like railroad spikes driving into my temporal lobes. Needless to say, I didn’t “import CD” to my iTune.

Don’t get me wrong, I still appreciate what the Beatles have done and what they continue to do for not only pop music, but also pop culture as a whole. To make a grocery list of their contributions: they standardized live concerts and music videos, inspired other artists’ song and album titles and covers, made it cool for boys to wear a “so-attractive ankle boot, a trend that has lasted” and ‘man’ or ‘apologise’ and ‘my eyes.’” Not only are the Beatles forcing rhymes, but also themes upon their fans. Their earlier lyrics are largely confined to the subject of idealized love. Singing “about what every girl wants, namely, ‘to be adored and even worshipped,’” the Beatles lure in their pubescent listeners, raging hormones and all, with unattainable love the way horses are led by carrots.

Beatlemania, however, wasn’t solely comprised of panty-throwing teen-age girls, but rather encompassed a wider audience. Fans of both yesterday and today cover a broad spectrum of ages. Geoff Baker, press officer for the Beatles’ label, acknowledges the Beatles’ large contemporary fan base when he says, “The biggest demographics (among I’s buyers) are 16 to 24-year-olds and those over 45.” Their seemingly universal acceptance (with some exceptions, eh-hem) is largely attributed to some mysterious “lasting quality” of their songs. In his article “Do the Beatles Still Matter?”, Tom Sinclair argues that the Beatles’ popularity is a result of this je ne sais quoi when he writes that “they hit just about anyone’s aural pleasure center so straight and true.”

Hit it? More like hypnotized it. The Beatles’ music, especially their earlier work, is like Miracle-Gro® for mind-numbing entrenchment. Davies recognizes the conditions necessary for manic behavior in “the regularity of rhythm…enhanced by the over-balance of bass and percussion. The output of excessively high volume creates a psychological sensory response which floods one’s sensory modality. Reiteration of thematic and verbal material…also creates a hypnotic effect.” As for the cause’s effect, the responses educated from Beatlemania confirm Davies’ suspicions. Those uncontrollable teenage girls, with their screaming, panting and fainting, “have all the marks of a mass hypnotic phenomenon.” At least they’re aware of it. Davies reports that “half the adolescents studied were aware of the cathartic nature of Beatle Mania, along with its orgiastic facets.”

Even though I don’t like the Beatles themselves, I have to admit that I do appreciate the influence they have on pop music. Of course, that’s based on the premise that it’s possible to isolate the cause from the effect, to enjoy progress in isolation. No one really likes cowpox, but if it results in a vaccine for smallpox, I guess it’s worth the hassle.
It is the early nineteenth century, and through some combination of squatting, disease transmission, swindling, bureaucratic browbeating, threat making and overhunting, you have managed to persuade the natives to leave a patch of land. It is now time to design your “settlement.” How will you and your fellow settlers inhabit this “virgin” landscape? There’s nothing of value to work with, and you’re representing civilization here. Where do you turn for guidance? You don’t need to turn around at all, because you’ve seen your future town already. It’s in the past. It’s in the East. You know what you have to do. You have to break out the protractor.

Like thousands of small towns, Geneseo has a Main Street, and parallel to its Main Street runs Second Street. Other streets intersect these at right angles. To me and to most other Americans, this just makes sense, and getting from place to place is a simple matter of up and over, of separate “steps” in a process: so many blocks this way, and so many blocks that way. The construction of towns in this way seems automatic, and most importantly, efficient. But as Americans, it is also all we’ve ever known. From New York City to Washington DC to Los Angeles, and pretty much every place in between, American cities are remarkably uniform. A few comparisons at Google Maps reveal that they have very little in common with European cities in terms of layout. Perhaps it was the rapidity of their founding that lead to American cities ending up so similar, so square. Without a doubt our special arrangements are related to our capitalist origins: a society built on mass production and commoditization will mass produce city blocks, and cities themselves. European Cities have a much more complex history of land ownership and expansion, and that history is reflected in the unique layout.

The American landscape has history, but it goes unacknowledged. Perhaps when history is effaced we automatically look to the square, the most reassuring of shapes, to give our lives some stability and structure. That would explain the repetition of the grid in our cities and towns. What may be more interesting than what’s labeled and listed in the old Atlases and Gazetteers of Livingston County is what isn’t labeled or listed. In The New Century Atlas of Livingston County for the year 1902, only roads and buildings are labeled. In neither the 1902 nor the 1872 atlas were Native American paths or landmarks mentioned. In the blank space of “wilderness,” however, there is a somewhat revealing illustration. In the left hand margin there is a picture of a pack of running dogs followed by dapper lads and ladies on horseback. This is the Geneseo wilderness in the year 1902: the area where foxes are hunted. Other than the simple shapes and the wealthy hunters, the rest of reality is a time-yellowed page. Other than a phantom presence in the town’s nomenclature, there is no Seneca history worth recording. Nothing is off the grid.

But let’s get back to the great American squaring. The more I look around, the more I am convinced that American society is dependent upon the parallelogram for symbolic reassurance, and that this dependence has something to do with our history. Corner stones, city blocks, patchworks of fields, pedestals, picture frames, town squares, Times New Roman text, college quads, and college greens: the parallelogram is a symbol of stability and of civility. It is also a shape that is important for building stable things like desks and houses. It seems, however, that we have become more than a little captivated by the concept of the parallelogram, and our excuse about “efficiency” just doesn’t hold water. Energy-wise, our cities are anything but efficient; they are only efficiently understood. Looking at a historical map of Geneseo and thinking about how we use and categorize space, it seems we believe that we need only to enclose something to take control of it. Our repeated use of the square, the box, the grid, the cube, and the block seems at first a product of our compulsion, and only secondly a matter of efficient utility.

You’re hungry. You live in a society that, as Michael Pollan observes in his book, The Omnivore’s Dilemma, has no cuisine and no tradition set down for the act of eating. You’ve never grown a plant. In fact, you can hardly cook; your mother could hardly cook. Fortunately, through no effort of your own, you were born into a society that has arranged for long-dead plants to be pumped from beneath a desert on the other side of the earth, refined into petroleum, and delivered at a low cost to your local gas station in grid-town, USA. Now you need a square meal. So what do you do? Do you need guidance?

Probably not. You’ve grown up in this environment, and you know that food is sealed, and that it comes in boxes stacked neatly at the local supermarket. In fact, the supermarket is also a box, with no windows and no clocks.

To be fair, there are plenty of other shapes to be found at the local supermarket. In addition to lots and lots of boxes, there is also a fair share of cylinders filled with soda, cookie dough, potato chips, fruit, beans and beef jerky. There are also quite a few bags too; one of life’s great mysteries is why cereal is boxed and chips are bagged. Perhaps cereal is grant-
ed the symbol of stability because we see it as more than a snack: we see it as a meal. Our obsession with packaging is really quite strange. Even when one goes inside a fast food restaurant the meal is carefully wrapped, boxed, and then bagged like a Christmas present, only to be ripped open less than a minute later.

Is there congruence between the way we treat our land and the way we treat our food? If the city grid attempts to efface the messy history of the landscape, then the cereal box tries to efface the messy process of acquiring and preparing one’s own food. The truth is that we don’t know how we got where we are, and we don’t know where our food came from. “You eat with your eyes first,” a cook once told me, “then with your mouth.” We should see the history of our land when we look at it, just as we should see the history of our meal before we eat it. The containers conceal the substance, just as the maps do the history. If we cannot know the history then the land is not really ours; if we don’t know the source then the food isn’t either.
Going into the girls’ bathroom in downstairs Welles can be, in many ways, almost as enlightening as going into one of the classrooms. Not only can a curious girl find out just how loud the hand-driers can be, or try to get someone to buy her old futon, but she can also discover that all the sisters of AOPi are “trashy bitches” and that there is “no love in Sigma Delta Tau.”

The bathroom stalls in Welles are scrawled with graffiti, mainly about different sororities, and the hostility radiating from the doors is enough to shock you. Filled with pro- and anti-Greek propaganda, the animosity scrawled on the wood demands a second look. Most of the inked sentiments began as peppy plugs for various sororities, but over time, they have been crudely reworked and altered. Hearts are crossed out, words are added, and the end result is an ugly display of hatred that defies any notions of sisterhood. If you pay attention, you can discover that while one girl “loves her sig delts!,” another girl thinks that “Gamma Chi Epsilon Bitches” “scare the shit out of me.” While one scrawl chirps about “love in phetas,” another supplants “Sigma Kappa” with “Ew!” and “sluts unite!” The entire scene seems petty and immature, bringing to mind cliquey middle school girls and the cafeteria tables that you knew you weren’t allowed to sit at. But this is college. Sororities do charity work, and shabby gossip is a thing banished to your ninth grade homeroom. Right?

One has to wonder about the girls who decorate our bathrooms in such a manner. Who are they, and where do they come from? Getting admitted to Geneseo is no easy feat, so these displays are clearly not a product of ignorance. More often than not, the girls walking around campus in lettered anoraks are well-dressed, articulate, and coming from the library. Is it something about the inside of a wooden bathroom stall that brings out the twelve-year-old rebel in these girls? Is their Greek pride so overwhelming that it must spill out onto any available canvas? Is their delight in their organizations such that they cannot bear to see another sorority’s name surrounded with a crude ballpoint heart?

Obviously, not every girl who is in a sorority is to blame for this coarse propaganda, but the girls that are make life more difficult for their fellow sisters. The stigmas and stereotypes that are already in place in regard to sororities are magnified by this kind of behavior. Any girl that is involved in Greek life will tell you that they have a bad reputation for no reason, and that they do more charity work and community fundraising than they’re ever given credit for. This might be true, but when students have proof in permanent marker written on the walls of their lecture halls, it’s hard to shake the idea that a sorority girl might bite your head off for talking to the wrong people.

Why do sorority girls concentrate their energy in such negative ways? By using the bathroom walls as an outlet, they only generate more negative attitudes. Not only does their bathroom graffiti allow them to say bad things about other organizations, it causes a poisonous chain of events. Negative statements cause retaliation, which only spreads the web of propaganda. It has gotten to the point that not only do sororities pen insults against other sororities, but also non-affiliated girls write too, insulting sororities in general. “You pay for your friends,” reads one inscription from a member of the lacrosse team, “we lax with ours.” Underneath it, someone has written “that’s mean,” but then again, are we surprised? Why do these girls care so much, and why do they choose to express those feelings on the bathroom walls? Instead of campaigning to change the image of Greek life, or doing something positive to build up their image, they become mean seventh-graders, cutting down others for a momentary boost. Contrary to promoting Greek life, they smear its name, making it seem teenaged and frightening, a hotbed of mean girls right out of a Lindsey Lohan movie. Instead of promoting their organizations, they work against themselves self-destructively, reinforcing every negative stereotype in the book. The entire ordeal seems a bit surreal, as if these markered jabs are an illusion, written as a hoax by some fictional character. It doesn’t seem logical, or real, but it is. There is no denying the truth. The evidence is printed on the walls, for all to see.
A little over three hundred and fifty years ago, John Milton wrote the poem, “When I Consider How My Light is Spent,” which describes the “dark world and wide” that Milton experienced after losing his sight. The blind poet describes his feelings of uselessness, piety, and, more importantly for the purposes of this article, his fear. Milton’s Protestant faith was very important to him, and he attempted to do God’s will with his writing. Milton compares his situation to the parable of the talents that Jesus used to teach his disciples the importance of spreading the Word. In this parable, a wealthy man gives each of his servants a talent (a very large amount of money) before he goes away for several years. While two of the servants use their talents to make even more money for their master, the other hides his talent in the ground for fear of being robbed. When the master returns, he rebukes this servant for his cowardice and laziness. Milton fears God’s similar displeasure, viewing his cessation of writing as analogous to hiding his talent (pun intended by Milton) from the world. When the master returns, he rebukes this servant for his cowardice and laziness. Milton fears God’s similar displeasure, viewing his cessation of writing as analogous to hiding his talent (pun intended by Milton) from the world.

So it happened that after one hour, a shot of morphine, a shot of Benadryl (to counter my allergic reaction to the morphine) and a dozen anesthetic eye drops after the initial incident, I felt some relief. The doctor put some disgusting goo in my eye, patched it shut and sent me home. Even though my left eye was unharmed, I was unable to open it for the next twenty-four hours (until my next eye appointment) due to the pain that doing so caused my right eye. After my eye checkup, I shut my left eye again for most of the day. So it came to pass that after twenty-one years of seeing, I spent about thirty hours in darkness. And it scared the shit out of me.

I discovered that fear operates based on a simple mathematical equation: Fear equals Darkness multiplied by Pain. By darkness I mean lack of information—since most of the information we gather about the world comes in through the eye, darkness makes an appropriate metaphor, hence the phrase “kept in the dark.” Likewise, “Pain” does not necessarily mean physical pain; it can be psychological as well. The Pain term in the equation can also mean “the perceived potential for pain.” To apply this (extremely scientific) formula to my situation, my Darkness was acute, my Pain was quite severe, and the perceived psychological Pain of potentially losing an eye was even worse, so I was very, very afraid.

To get back to Milton, though fear is present in the poem, it is not extremely pronounced. The darkness he experienced was absolute (his vision, unlike mine, never returned), but his pain was not very great. He expresses concern that God will be displeased with him, but quickly reassures himself that “they also serve who stand and wait,” meaning that God will reward whatever contribution he is capable of making, even if that means simply staying faithful through adversity. (One gets the sense that Milton had already decided this from the start, and the intro-
duction of fear into the poem was really just a rhetorical device.)

So what are the implications of this formula? As I have said, “Darkness” does not necessarily mean the absence of light, only the absence of knowledge. Let’s consider a topic which concerns fear: propaganda. Propaganda usually relies heavily on fear, as can be seen in any anti-communist Cold War propaganda. “The Red Menace”—communists—are presented as wholly Other, and therefore unknowable (Darkness). In addition, propaganda is filled with the threat of violence—during the Cold War, it was imminent nuclear war (Pain). As a result, this propaganda was extremely effective, and the Cold War was a time characterized by intense fear and paranoia. This sort of rampant fear allowed for such unpleasant policies as McCarthyism and Containment.

Xenophobia and racism also could not exist without fear. We see the same formula as in the anti-communist propaganda of the Cold War: a group is identified as Other, and their Otherness contains some perceived threat to our wellbeing: the Other is conspiring against our government, the Other will take our jobs, the Other is in some way inferior and will weaken our society, etc. These conspiracy theories and stereotypes are founded in Darkness—lack of knowledge—and the Pain associated with them is a perceived pain, rather than a realized one.

Fear can be a healthy thing. It has kept our species alive for millions of years: Caveman sees fire, Caveman does not understand fire, Caveman burns hand in fire, so Caveman fears fire and decides not to roll around in it. However, we no longer live in caves, and our world is significantly more knowable than Caveman’s. He did not have Wikipedia or CNN. We do. When we encounter something which we know nothing about, we have no excuse for failing to properly eradicate the Darkness surrounding it by educating ourselves. At the risk of sounding didactic, I will close with a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first inaugural address, delivered at the height of the Great Depression: “This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Smog

I make you, when I drive my car. I shout breath into your lungs as you whisper death into mine.

You, the waste of the world, waste because we can’t use you, we can’t put you back into our factories, our diners, our furnaces, can’t make some more of that glorious green Money.

You cough in our faces, and sputter: “Fuck you.”

You smile with burnt teeth, “You can’t use what you made, You won’t use me.”

You’re not one of God’s beloved, are you? You’re simple Adam, you’re naked Eve. And I’m god, in my beat-up Dodge— birthing you, casting you, East of Eden.

But you just stand there, like some stubborn child giving me the finger.

Damn right.

William Sankey
The Student Association, a form of student government throughout SUNY campuses, is a true ideology. According to Terry Eagleton, literary critic, ideologies are forms of social manipulation. They’re a way of subconsciously distracting people from truly revolutionizing by fulfilling them in other ways: the church through prayer, literature through romanticism, and SA through programming. We are sold into SA as an incoming freshman through an eighty-five dollar fee for funding programs across campus. Much like we are raised into our religions and forced to read certain literature, we are required, although it is voted upon by current students, to pay this “mandatory student activity fee.” And any incoming student, most of whom, despite the efforts of SA, are unaware of the charge, cannot help but notice the bold “S” and “A” stamped on every form of publicity. This symbolic graffiti is at the heart of your college campus. Whether placed neatly in a corner or stretched with explanation across the bottom of a page, this defacing acronym, is, in fact, the reason for Third Eye Blind, vacation buses, and free trucker hats in the union.

SA is here to organize and promote student activity and community. Why, then, do students so often look down upon it? On average, we’re not naive enough to hate something simply because it is an authority, and we’re not rebellious enough to speak against it because it’s controlling us. Or are we? SA is responsible for all the cultural, academic, and communication organizations on campus. They’re supposed to use students’ eighty five dollars for the benefit of these organizations. Students may voice their complaints against SA but seem to refuse to take any action; perhaps we’re focused on other things, or perhaps we really are fulfilled by Rockapella concerts.

SA is often criticized for a bias towards certain organizations. The Lamron has a budget of 20,000 dollars from the student association whereas other organizations have less than half this generous amount (can you find an even more dramatic example? Organizations with only an eighth or a sixteenth? A la mint?) The renowned and rightfully respected newspaper does refund most of their budget through advertising. Is it fair that capitalist motives have diminished SA’s goal to organize and promote student activity? The Student Association has admitted to making exceptions for the Lamron in budget issues that they would not have made for other organizations. Why?

The Lamron is the most widespread publication on campus. It advertises SUNY Geneseo events, discusses issue in the community, and even boasts professor-written articles. What better way is there to fulfill student desire to be involved than to read about it? The Lamron is the literature of the Student Association ideology and they get reimbursed for it.

SA runs through three main standing committees: Inter-Residence Council, Activities Commission, and the Academic Affair Committee: Where we live, what we do, and how we learn. Students still choose
ignorance and acceptance over knowledge and revolutions. This is not to say that the Student Association is by any means some great corrupt organization, or a bunch of bodies behinds desks. They do promote themselves and inform students of their role. However, even with this bombardment of information we find limited student participation. For various reasons of course: we are concerned with our education, distracted by the whims of the real college life, and are ultimately self-concerned. We do not have time for awareness.

SA rules with symbols. SA does have money from every student. SA has infiltrated every aspect of our campus existence. SA HAS INFILTRATED EVERY ASPECT OF OUR CAMPUS EXISTENCE. AS STUDENTS WE HAVE A RIGHT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE “MANDATORY FEE,” BUT WE HAVE YET TO VOTE AGAINST IT.

As students we have a right to complain about the “mandatory fee,” but we have yet to vote against it. As students we have a right to complain about bias towards certain organizations but we have yet to formally take action towards equality. Students are accepting, pre-occupied and lazy. SA takes advantage of it, as any ideology would. They inform us, we have no excuses. They make students aware of where their money is going: that’s what the stamp is for. But there does exist a few inquiring minds who want to know what the “S” and “A” represent. Those two letters are supposed to represent YOU as a student. Those two letters have come to represent bodies of people who are elected to positions more often than not because no one else wanted them. They have come to represent activities that use your money, but that you refuse to participate in. It’s working. By placing that stamp on everything, by sending out the informational packets, by distracting you with belly dancers and Third Eye Blind, SA takes action while you sit in Newton doodling during Geology.

SA president Brendan Quinn, when asked if SA was an ideal, said that it was a properly and successfully working system for the students’ benefit. According to Eagleton’s criteria, the Student Association is an ideology. According to students, it is two letters on a poster contact that is papered to the floor of the college union.

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**English Department Writing Contest**

**Submission Guidelines:**

All submissions must be typed and double-spaced (except poetry and drama) and submitted in hard copy. No submissions via email.

Include two cover sheets: on the first include your name, address, email and phone number, and the title and genre of your submission; on the second, print only the title and genre. Your name should not appear anywhere else on the submission.

Do not submit your only copy as manuscripts will not be returned.

Winners will need to provide an electronic copy of work immediately following notification of selection.

**Winning entries will be published online in MiNT’s final issue.**

**Contest opens April 1**

**Deadline is April 15**

Winners will be announced by May 1, 2008

Entries must be submitted to the English Department, Welles 22

Please note that failure to conform to guidelines will result in disqualification.
Ego Trip

This vanity’s a sin
and I don’t even care.
These moments of acceptance
are so few and far between,
I just want to bathe in this feeling
of substantiated narcissism.

I let my hair down
and marvel at the darkness in my eyes.
These breasts that I’ve hated for so long,
much too large and obtrusive,
so says you,
are suddenly the wonderful curves of a woman
reaching towards the sky.

My belly,
which you say is too round,
is now soft flesh that is a part of me.

Down it goes,
my hips to my toes,
this beauty in me.

Jayme Faye Wonderland
IN A GENSEO DORM ROOM

Matt, did you read the paper?

Ever heard of knocking, Rick?
Dude, check it out!

Somebody totally went Vigilante on Orchard Street last night!

Dude, what's that helmet doing on your floor?!?

The Lamron
Masked "Hero"
Assaults Three Drunk Students

Cool.
I am a unique and imperfect being. I am disorganized, forgetful, and at times painfully shy. I sleep too late, I am an absolutely horrible cook, and I would much rather spend my time composing music than writing that important research paper worth twenty percent of my grade. It would be incredibly easy for me to continue this list of my imperfections. I’m sure that most people could write a list of their imperfections without much thought or hesitation. This is because today’s society thrives on imperfection. It is found in the media we consume, the concepts we are taught in school, even in the lessons that are passed down from our parents and previous generations.

However, in today’s world we don’t stop by merely recognizing the many imperfections that exist within ourselves; we also focus heavily on the imperfect and corrupt nature of others. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first philosopher to hypothesize that human beings are inherently good. In Rousseau’s view of human nature, humans are corrupted only by the evils of society. However, most people are incredibly reluctant to accept this view of human kind. In fact, his view is nearly the exact opposite of the view accepted by the corrupt and imperfection-driven society of today. How could humans with such a wide variety
of imperfections be anything but corrupt?

We are taught to assume the worst in people at a very young age. Many can attest to the fact that one of the first important rules they learned from their parents was “don’t take candy from strangers.” I know that in my five year old mind, this phase automatically made me associate anyone I didn’t know with danger. As we grow older that “candy” serves as a constant reminder of the way we should perceive those around us. Most of us can’t take a compliment from a stranger without questioning their motives. Many would never accept a reward without suspiciously wondering why. If a stranger smiles at us while walking down the street, most people would automatically assume they were either mentally unstable or up to no good.

We are reminded of this evil throughout grade school, secondary school, high school and even in college, as we are constantly taught about the corrupt actions of humans. We learn about wars and massive death tolls. We learn about racism and sexism. We learn about corrupt leaders and their corrupt policies. There is no question that these lessons translate into our everyday lives as we question how humans that are “inherently good” could ever treat each other with such a blind hatred.

In today’s society, these lessons are enhanced by one specific outlet that has not been as prevalent in the past, and that is the media. As a Communication and Media major I am the first to admit that the media creates a powerful alternate reality that is incredibly difficult to escape. We view advertisements that depict violence, sexism and racism as acceptable parts of society on an everyday basis. We enhance negative male stereotypes by watching soap operas where husbands break up marriages by simultaneously sleeping with three other women. We read magazines that project the message that women who are imperfect lead unrewarding lives. The media have created the perception among most of the public that imperfections and corruption are synonymous with one another.

It is easy to bash the media. It is easy to figure that it’s not human beings that have created a society thriving on corruption, it’s just the money-making media messages we encounter everyday. However, what we must realize is that the media does not exist on its own. Advertisers, magazines, newspapers and commercials would not exist without the human beings that produce them. Just as real human beings are behind the media, the media would also cease to exist without the support of the general public. We are all responsible for the views on corruption that exist in society today. We also have the ability to change them.

As human beings that interact with the media on an everyday basis, we have the ability to revolutionize the way the media portray human beings. As future parents, we can keep our children safe, without instilling a fear of the unknown that will travel through generations. We have the power to view the history we learn in our classes for what it is and form our own world views based on the future instead of the past. It will certainly not be easy, but we are capable.

In order to move forward, one important distinction must be made. Humans are imperfect, but that does not mean we are all corrupt individuals. It means we are real. Jean Jacques Rousseau took a leap when he theorized that human beings are inherently good. Now it’s our turn.

Done Reading your MiNT?

SHARE THE WEALTH
Advocates for Recycling MiNT Magazine
The sun shone, as if it were a perfectly ordinary morning, because it was. Despite our every instinct about how the weather should behave according to the celebrations and tragedies of our lives, the weather does what the weather does, and on this day, the weather was quite nice. There was snow on the ground melting gently under the sunlight and not a cloud in the sky dared block any of its warmth. My father, my stepmother and I arrived at my brother Jon’s house to have breakfast and see my brother Timmy off. Tim moved out to western New York in September to rent the dairy farm that now houses his two hundred and ten cows. He and his girlfriend Kirsty came home for Christmas, but they couldn’t leave their respective farms for very long (Kirsty works on her parents’ fifteen hundred cow dairy farm), and it was time for them to leave.

Breakfast was good—we had flaxseed pancakes and bacon from the pigs that Jon and his wife Jen raised that year. We had all finished eating and were sitting around the table talking when Tim’s phone rang, for about the third time that morning. He said it was Amos (Kirsty’s brother and Tim’s fraternity brother from Cornell) and excused himself from the table. Tim stood up and started to walk away from the table when he made a gut-wrenching noise that sounded like “Oh my God!”

My immediate thought was that Tim was in physical pain—but that made no sense in the context. As Tim collapsed on the couch in tears, I thought that someone must be hurt, but quickly realized that it was much worse than that. Death is the only one thing I know of that can produce such a rapid and cataclysmic change in a person—it is sharp, world-shattering, and absolute. It is with the deepest self-revulsion that I admit that, as I watched—stupefied and silent—my brother experience the most intense pain I have ever witnessed—pain so intense that it still brings tears to my eyes even now just knowing that anyone, especially Tim, is capable of feeling such pain, my next emotion was relief—since it was Amos calling, this geographically distanced the tragedy from me. This was Tim’s tragedy, not mine. We believe that tragedy is a function of proximity. It took several helpless minutes for anyone to elicit a response from my brother. He finally managed to tell us that Collin was dead. He was run over by the feed truck.

I sat on the couch next to my brother with fresh tears on my cheeks, rubbing his shoulder helplessly, as if my hand contained some sort of healing salve to numb the loss he felt—as if a firm squeeze on the shoulder could bring back the dead. I cried too. I cried for Tim, that he should have to feel so sad, but mostly I cried for myself—that I should have to see him feeling so sad. No one said much for the next twenty minutes, as we all either cried or hugged whoever was crying. I wanted to write poetry. Because that’s all I could think to do when faced with real life—to make it all make sense by obfuscation, to turn tragedy into art. I’m aware of the irony as I write this now, but it’s unavoidable. “I am the artful voyeur.” I think I finally understand these words that
I have quoted and misquoted so many times. It is a declaration of self-reproach, but a cunning one. It is an acknowledgement of the offense and imprpropriety of aesthetisizing tragedy, but also a conceited declaration of daedal skill—“I write it out in a verse”. It is a recognition of the absurdity of even attempting redress in the face of such tragedy—“all art is quite useless,” and also of the intent to carry out that attempt: “I can’t go on, I’ll go on.”

What followed was one of the most surreal moments of my life. Since Jon and Jen went to Jen’s parents for Christmas, we had not yet exchanged gifts, and since Tim and Kirsty were leaving in less than an hour, now was the only time to do so. We would like to believe that Christmas did not have the audacity to come this year, but it had. We opened our presents and tried to be happy about it. We pretended that there was nothing outside the room—tragedy is a function of proximity, and it is elsewhere. For a moment, it seemed to work, until I looked over and saw Tim quietly crying into his presents. My smile shamefully dissolved.

We said our goodbyes, which were a bit more emotional than usual. It’s funny how it often takes a tragedy to elicit an “I love you” between family members. That is not to say that I don’t have a loving family, because I do, but we often neglect to say so because we assume it is implied and unnecessary. With Tim and Kirsty out of our helpless reach, we said goodbye to Jon and Jen and left for home. Along the way, I was surprised to see that the rest of the world was oblivious. I was still under the delusion that nothing existed outside of our car, yet here were people enjoying the warm and beautiful weather: people buying groceries, eating lunch, and checking their mail—the Post Office was even open. My surprise turned to anger as it dawned on me that these people were distanced from this tragedy. To them, this was our tragedy. Nothing I could do would make the rest of the world care about the pain that I felt. This doesn’t make them bad people; it’s just the way the world works. No one has the time, the energy or the mental fortitude to investigate every tragedy, to learn about the aspirations and regrets of the victims, to understand what their lives meant to the people they touched, or to recognize what the world has lost now that they are gone. If you had the capacity for compassion like that, you would not last a day.

I attended the calling hours and funeral service for Collin in Delhi, New York, along with Tim, Kirsty, my father and my step-mother. It was not until I picked up a small pamphlet at the funeral home and read “Collin Eric Haight, born August 12, 1984, died December 26, 2007” written in cold, honest, indelible Times New Roman font that I was finally able to cry for Collin. The funeral service was perfect. Friends and relatives were asked to speak about Collin. There were a lot of laughs, but more tears. For me, the worst part was learning about the events preceding the accident. Collin worked as a herdsman at Donnan Farms in York, just a few miles from Geneseo. He worked on Christmas day because he could make more money and take an extra day off the following weekend when he planned to visit his family, whom he had not seen for several months. Since he could not go home for Christmas, his housemate Matt invited him to his own grandparents’ house for Christmas dinner. A couple of days after the accident which claimed Collin’s life, Matt’s grandparents received a thank you card from Collin, which he had woken up early on the day after Christmas to write and mail before he went to work. This sort of thoughtfulness was routine for Collin. On that same infamous morning, he stopped at my brother’s farm on his way to work to check on Tim’s cows, and text messaged Tim that he had a healthy new heifer calf born that morning.

I consider myself lucky to have met Collin and to have had the chance to spend some time with him, either having lunch at “The Landing” in York as he and my brother did about six days a week, or working alongside him when he would come to Tim’s farm on his day off to help us install new cow mattresses in the stalls. Collin was, in every sense of the word, a genuine person. When he spoke to you, he really listened and cared about what you had to say. He was intelligent, inquisitive, and passionate about learning, as evidenced by his triple major at Cornell (Applied Economics and Management, Animal Sciences, and Crop and Soil Sciences) and the book he published about his family history dating back to the mid-seventeenth century which he spent years researching. He also loved to challenge himself, which is why he worked on a three-thousand cow dairy farm—every day presented new problems, new obstacles to overcome, and new chances to excel.

My brother tells me that Collin was fond of the word “tremendous.” Tim would call Collin to tell him that he had another newborn bull calf, and Collin would respond, in his best crusty-old-farmer voice, with something like “Well Timmy, that’s no way to run a business. What are you going to do in two years when you don’t have any new animals to milk? That’s not being very tremendous. You ought to convince those girls to give you some heifer calves.” (I forgot to mention Collin’s sense of humor.) Every day, Collin not only worked hard, but he did his best at something he loved to do. He worked at Donnan Farms because he felt it was the best opportunity to experience the responsibilities and challenges of dairy farming on a large scale. With a triple degree from Cornell, he could have done a lot of things and probably made a lot more money doing them, but farming was what Collin was passionate about. To me, being tremendous means just that—pursuing your passions and excelling in them. I think Collin was tremendous just about every day of his life.

Collin’s death has taught me another very important lesson. I have said that tragedy is a function of proximity, despite our ideas about we would like the world to work, but unfortunately, so is love. We love best those whose lives most closely touch our own. Love is too complex for just one ambiguous word—a fact that the Greeks well understood. They differentiated between agape—selfless love—and eros—self-interested love. With some rare exceptions, all human love is self-interested, but there are degrees of self-interest. On one side of the spectrum, we love others solely for what we get back, treating them as tools for our own happiness. On the other side, there is an eros which more closely resembles agape. This love is still self-interested, but only in the sense that at the core of our being, our greatest desire is for the person we love to be happy. This love is almost paradoxical—what makes us happiest is the happiness of the other person, yet we would sacrifice our own happiness to bring about the other’s. When I reflect on my initial reaction to my brother’s grief, I realize just how wrongly self-interested my love has been, and I sincerely hope that I can cultivate that other type of love in the future. For those whose passion is for friends and family, this is what being tremendous means.
Poetry: You all recognize it. It's that shard of language your high school teacher used to slough onto your desk. The word conjures up fond memories or causes you to let out a groan and your eyes to glaze over. To some people it is everything, to others, nothing. Some see it as a mark of snobbery, while others see it as the sign of a life fully lived. So what exactly is the big deal with poetry?

Before I proceed, I want to make it clear that I am not “defending” poetry. Poetry needs no defense. In fact, if you’re afraid of poetry, or feel positively ambivalent about it, that’s wonderful. Poetry has no need for half-hearted followers. After talking to many students, I’ve found that poetry reading is either among the most or least prominent things on students’ minds. I’m writing to explore why people still think poetry is important and why people have such strong feelings about it.

One person who is in the “poetry-is-everything” group is Amy Lowell. In her essay, “Why We Should Read Poetry,” she asserts: “We should read poetry because only in that way can we know man in all his moods – in the most beautiful thoughts of his heart, in his farthest reaches of imagination, in the tenderness of his love, in the nakedness and awe of his soul confronted with the terror and wonder of the Universe.” If you’re like me, you first reacted to these words with a benign feeling of warm furriness, which was immediately followed with a resilient shout of “Poppycock!” Poetry is not the “only” way to understand those two immensities (i.e. life and death). I’m pretty sure Shakespeare does a good job at understanding the human condition in both the poetry and prose sections of his plays and Frederick Douglass’s autobiography delves into life just as well as any poem does.

I think Lowell’s idea is useful if we remember that poetry is one path – among many – that leads to a more varied perception of life. For me, a poem signifies importance; the poet believes an image, thought, or idea is worth writing. Poetry is a sort of social contract between the poet and the reader that says “this text is worthy of a meticulous reading.” The fun of reading poetry, at least for me, lies on three levels: the simple joy of hearing beautiful words read aloud, trying to understand the meaning of that particular matrix of words, and deciding whether or not I agree with the poem’s sentiment.

Aside from Lowell, there are many other poetry lovers out there that are just as high-minded with regard to poetry. For example, in her online essay, “How to Like Poetry and Why,” Allie Stielau argues: “The best poetry distills your own thoughts and experiences; it reveals something you’ve always known, but in words more vibrant and succinct than you could imagine.” If this is what the “best poetry” does, then I will either immediately stop reading poetry, or devote myself solely to doggerel. I think Stielau’s idea is a very debilitating view of poetry; it assumes that we only appreciate poetry that mimics our own thoughts, our own prejudices, and our own particular identity. If poetry does not repack your own thoughts, what does it do? The poet Jane Hirshfield adeptly sums up poetry’s purpose: “Great poetry is not a donkey carrying obedient sentiment in pretty forms, it is a bird of prey tearing open whatever needs to be opened.” This, at least for me, is the point of poetry (or any work of art): to challenge both your perception and your perceptions. This challenging comes in so many forms that I could not possibly do it justice in this short article; it can question your beliefs, point out faults in your concept of justice, and, when approached with an open frame of mind, make you a better person.

It’s easy to write highfalutin ideas about poetry when we are at a safe distance from the actual poems. I’ve found that most ideas about poetry – even the ones I’ve already mentioned – are irrelevant to my actual experience of sitting down and reading a poem. I don’t hold a poem in my hand and think to myself, “It’s time to challenge my thought process,” before reading it through. I sit down, and – when I’m having a good day – can carry obedient sentiment in pretty purpose: “Great poetry is not a donkey carrying obedient sentiment in pretty forms, it is a bird of prey tearing open whatever needs to be opened.” This, at least for me, is the point of poetry (or any work of art): to challenge both your perception and your perceptions. This challenging comes in so many forms that I could not possibly do it justice in this short article; it can question your beliefs, point out faults in your concept of justice, and, when approached with an open frame of mind, make you a better person.

This all gets at the fundamental challenge of poetry: the very process of reading it. I don’t blame people for disliking
poetry because it is easy to dislike; it forces us to focus our minds, and our minds usually resist such focusing. For me, the big deal with poetry lies in the struggle between my desire to center my attention and my natural tendency to wander off in thought. It is because of this that I do not see any difference between poetry reading and meditation. In fact, my favorite collection of poems is the *Dhammapada*, which contains the sayings of the Buddha. It is the essence of Buddhism. If I could boil down my reasons for meditating on poetry, I could not do better than the Buddha himself:

> Hard it is to train the mind, which goes where it likes and does what it wants. But a trained mind brings health and happiness. The wise can direct their thoughts, subtle and elusive, wherever they choose: a trained mind brings health and happiness.

Poetry forces us to direct our thoughts – to be active readers. In the very act of reading poetry, we challenge ourselves, and that is why it is a big deal. It is necessarily dense because that is how the genre works; its recalcitrance to narrow interpretations jerks us out of our complacent, brain dead existence – it is a means of breaking our own mind-forged manacles. Enough said – I think I’ll go read a poem now.

**Carcinogenic Candy**

Ammonia
Arsenic
  Tastes like Fall
  First lit fireplaces
  As the colors change
  Jump in a pile of leaves
  Inhaling the brisk smoke
Benzene
Cadmium
Carbon Monoxide
  The first drag suffocates
  The second startles with its familiarity
  By the third I am five years old again
Chromium
Cyanide
Formaldehyde
  Riding in Grandma’s car
  Years of chain-smoking
  Embedded in the fabric
  Envelopes the senses
Nickel
Nicotine
Lead
  It feels like home

*Jayme Faye Wonderland*
STUDENT ASSOCIATION SUPPORTED BY MANDATORY STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES