



LET'S CHILL OUT FOR A WHILE!

By Jason Lewicki

Winter break is over, which means that school is back in session just in time for finals. As the semester winds to a close, winter itself is just starting: the biting chill of the wind is only growing stronger and stronger, especially as snow approaches on the horizon. We're in for some cold weather ahead, but I know that us Milford folks can take it!



The onset of January brings with it the promise of freezing temperatures, with the thermostat dropping lower and lower as we approach the dead of winter. As temperatures decrease, tensions increase as the whole school buzzes with activity, with teachers wrapping up lesson plans and students studying as much as possible while the dreaded final exams grow closer and closer. However, the best way to weather adversity is to do so together; just like our school's mascot, we at MHS must face this growing stress head-on, allowing ourselves to be determined and prepared when finals finally arrive.

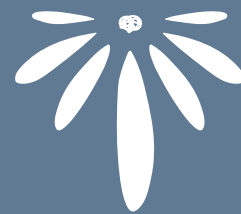
Whether you're new to MHS or a returning student, we're glad to have you. Here at our school, we have all sorts of avenues through which to connect with the students around you and show your Spartan spirit. Join a club! Attend a sports game! Support our theater program! Read our newspaper! These and more are just some of the ways you can have fun, meet new people, and make new memories here at Milford High School.

WEST
STREET
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WHAT ARE “PERVERSE IMPULSES?”



by Malakai Ramirez

You are assigned some homework due the next day. It is not that difficult and the subject is interesting. You should have no problem finishing it, so why do you wait? Time is ticking by and your notebook remains blank. Your sense of urgency grows while your precious time flows away, and with this anxiety tags along an unwanted craving for delay. The desire gathers strength and eventually prevails. You procrastinate too much.

There is before you an intimidating abyss. You peer down into the void and begin to feel sick and dizzy, but strangely, you remain. By imperceptible means your dizziness becomes giddiness and something about it is violently exciting. You can't help but imagine the sensations of falling from such a height. The rushing annihilation. You inch a little closer, then move closer still. If you are unable to deny this craving towards destruction, or if there is no friend to check you, you will fall and die. But why?

While the latter situation is several levels more intense than the former, they are both just a few of many occurrences of this phenomenon. We, being at least in some part bound to nature, still hold many features of our animal ancestors; some of them, we call impulses. We have evolved with them because they at one point in history served as advantageous, as they are supposed to help us survive by letting us fall back on basic survival mechanisms. One impulse, however, does not seem to fit within this paradigm; it seems to have been corrupted. Perverted. The perverse impulse is the desire for action for the reason we should not. This impulse is entirely antagonistic to self-preservation, so why do we have it?

The protagonist of “*The Imp of the Perverse*”, a short story by E. A. Poe, claims that there is no intelligible principle behind this desire. He repeatedly makes clear how said desire is incomprehensible, unreasonable, primitive, and irresistible, and that it will not, as he says, “*admit of analysis, or resolution into ulterior elements.*” Whether you want to trust the confession of a murderer, for the story is of a murderer struggling to explain his crime, is up to you. The apparent paradox revealed in this story still begs to be resolved. I propose three answers:

Punishment

It may be the result of divine intervention or natural evolution, but the perverse impulse may serve the purpose of involuntarily punishing ourselves for our sins. No matter how spiritual your interpretation of this phenomenon, you cannot deny that some behaviors result in a better self and world. It would make sense that nature would evolve in us behaviors that would allow ourselves to further our own interests and that of our species; when we act in ways that violate this natural inclination, we must repent. We must stop whatever harm we are doing and fix the damage, and so a trait might have evolved to prevent oneself or one's society from being hurt. In Poe's story, the narrator explains how he fell victim to the perverse impulse and confessed to a murder. The impulse in this case acted almost as if it were a command from a God who wanted justice, and because of God the murderer is sentenced to death, his violent tendencies now unable to pass on genetically or socially. The perverse impulse may be the mechanism by which to destroy the malignancy we cultivate within ourselves.

Trial

The reality of the human experience that makes itself so beautifully, yet painfully clear in many moments of our lives is undeniable. However, just because something can be clearly observed does not mean it is any more comprehensible. Questions of why this profound awareness of ourselves occurs is one matter: it could be because it is a sign that we are doing something right by God or that we have done something nature has evolved an imperative within us to do. But the question of how may provide some explanation for the paradox of the perverse impulse. How does the human spirit form within ourselves? The specifics of how are certainly debated but no creature belonging to the human species will deny that the answer is trial. In order to attain that higher-order fulfillment unique to us, rather than the base pleasure common to all animals, we do something beyond the capacity of any other creature: willingly live



There is no passion in nature so demonically impatient, as that of him who, shuddering upon the edge of a precipice, thus meditates a plunge.

a life of struggle and improve ourselves through strife, as like how a sword is formed by being beaten into proper shape. But what happens when the external pains that impose on our desires and so become the guidelines and guardrails necessary for our development go away? There may then be a need to mess things up, to cause ourselves problems in order to have something to improve upon. The perverse impulse may be the drive to fulfill this need. Without some kind of struggle, life becomes boring and meaningless, so there may be within us a will to impose obstacles upon ourselves to overcome.

Rebirth

Although there is much debate over the specifics of what it looks like, everyone can agree that progress is a good thing. Evolution makes sure that all life changes, whether individually or as a species, into an improvement upon what behaviors were exhibited or genes were expressed before. Since humans are subject to nature, we are also capable of progress, to an extent unparalleled by any other creature. But how does progress relate to the perverse impulse, a seemingly self-destructive force? In order for progress to occur, a new state of being must be created to progress towards; this means that progress is an act of creation. When progress occurs, something has happened to whatever has been progressed from. The state of affairs of whatever thing that has since been improved no longer exists. It is now gone, irretrievable, and one could even say it has been destroyed. The former status quo has been thrown away into nonexistence in favor of the better one we have created for ourselves. The creation that underlies progress necessitates destruction, and in order to fulfill our natural imperative to progress as a species, we must also be willing to destroy. The perverse impulse wills us towards setting seemingly needless fires simply because something better may rise from the ashes.

But how do any of these explain procrastination or such behaviors? Those who do a self-destructive act rarely ever think about it as consciously punishing themselves, or a fulfilling trial to be overcome, or an opportunity for renewal. But this is like saying that if we only eat food due to its taste and don't think about its nutritional value, we don't eat food for nutrients, or that since we rarely ever consciously think of someone else's facial symmetry when we find them attractive, then facial symmetry is not a good indicator of beauty. In the same way, any of these three reasons could explain the perverse impulse, even if they are not conscious.

It should also be noted that the perverse impulse may not even have evolved on its own but came about as an emergent property of other mental faculties interacting with each other. It also should be pointed out that we live in a natural world and nature isn't exactly how we want it to be. Just like how our physiology can turn against us, as in the case of autoimmune disorders, so too can our mind; it could be that this impulse may have had a rational use way back in our evolutionary history, but now is only a detriment. The explanation for the self-destructive impulse could be any one of these, or multiple, or even none, but in any case, this problem is one that should definitely be thought about, especially considering its impact on our lives and whether it can be used for good or ill.



CREATIVE WRITING

Meadow of Gray Lark

Anonymous

Green meadow darkened,
By sunlit forest,
Is there a calling,
Morning bird in dew,
With children in tow?

Simple shade by noon,
Tall grass weaving sharp,
With ebb and flow for,
Calming river smooth.
Be still, meadowlark.

Rolling hill of amber,
Anchor a cottage,
Withered with age,
Rotten from neglect.
Hatched roof brand new.

Newlyweds, come here,
To the cottage's hill-
"Meadow of Gray Lark".
Well off in the trees,
Sprout dandelions.

Green meadow become,
Of the small living.
Morning bird in dew,
With children in tow,
Sings a song anew.



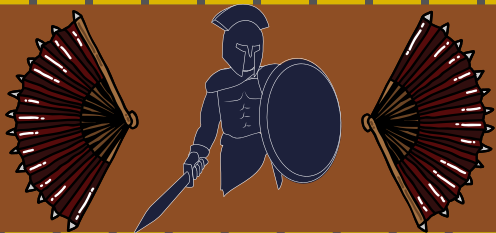
Western Meadow lark

"IF BY MY LIFE OR DEATH I CAN PROTECT YOU, I WILL. YOU HAVE MY SWORD."

ARAGORN, THE LORD OF THE RINGS

WHAT IS A FIGHTER?

A FIGHTER IS A SKILLED WARRIOR, A MASTER OF WARFARE AND BATTLE WHO RELIES ON SKILL, DETERMINATION, AND TACTICS TO BRING A SWIFT END TO THEIR FOES. A FIGHTER COULD BE A VENERABLE KNIGHT WHO PROTECTS THEIR KINGDOM, A FAMED GLADIATOR WHO MAKES BLOODSHED AN ART FORM, OR AN UNSCRUPULOUS MERCENARY WHO WILL SERVE UNDER WHATEVER BANNER OFFERS THEM THE MOST PAY, BUT EACH ONE SHARES A RELENTLESS DRIVE TO FIGHT UNTIL THE BATTLE IS WON. A FIGHTER CAN REJUVENATE THEIR VITALITY THROUGH SHEER FORCE OF WILL, UNLEASH A HAIL OF ATTACKS UPON THEIR FOES IN A SINGLE TURN, AND EVEN SHRUG OFF HARMFUL EFFECTS THAT WOULD SPELL DOOM FOR A LESSER COMBATANT. IF YOU WANT TO PROVE THAT RAW POWER OR MAGICAL GIMMICKS ARE NOTHING IN THE FACE OF RIGOROUS TRAINING AND CAREFUL PLANNING, THE FIGHTER IS THE CLASS FOR YOU.



HOW DOES A FIGHTER WORK?

FIGHTERS ARE OFTEN STEREOTYPED AS A SIMPLE CLASS, ONE THAT IS BEST FOR NEW PLAYERS WHO HAVE NEVER ROLLED A 20-SIDED DIE IN THEIR LIVES. THAT ASSUMPTION IS... NOT TOO FAR FROM THE TRUTH, HONESTLY. TO START, FIGHTERS USE A D10 FOR THEIR HIT DIE AND CAN USE ANY WEAPON OR TYPE OF ARMOR THAT THEY WANT, ALLOWING THEM TO BE BOTH VERSATILE AND RELIABLE IN COMBAT. IN REGARDS TO ABILITIES, FIGHTERS COMPENSATE FOR THEIR SIMPLICITY BY MAKING THE MOST OF THE GAME'S MECHANICS: NOT ONLY CAN THEY EVENTUALLY ATTACK MORE TIMES PER ROUND THAN ANY OTHER CLASS, BUT THEY ALSO GAIN MORE ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENTS BEFORE HITTING MAX LEVEL. THESE ABILITIES HELP THE CLASS REMAIN BOTH VERSATILE AND EFFECTIVE, LETTING THE PLAYER CUSTOMIZE THEIR FIGHTER IN ANY WAY THEY CHOOSE, THEN SET THEM LOOSE ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND WATCH THEM WRECK SHOP. OF COURSE, FIGHTERS DO ACTUALLY GET SOME OTHER ABILITIES, THOUGH THEY'RE PRETTY FEW IN NUMBER: THEY CAN HEAL THEMSELVES, TAKE AN EXTRA ACTION IN COMBAT, AND REROLL A SAVING THROW THEY WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE FAILED, WITH EACH OF THESE ABILITIES REQUIRING EITHER AN HOUR-LONG OR EIGHT-HOUR-LONG REST PERIOD TO RECHARGE. IN ADDITION, FIGHTERS GAIN WHAT'S KNOWN AS A FIGHTING STYLE AT LEVEL 1, WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO SELECT FROM A SMALL LIST OF MINOR BONUSES THAT CAN HELP THEM FURTHER DEVELOP THEIR RESPECTIVE...WELL, *FIGHTING STYLE*, FROM A SMALL INCREASE TO THEIR ARMOR CLASS TO INCREASED DAMAGE WITH THEIR UNARMED ATTACKS. ALL IN ALL, THOUGH THE FIGHTER MIGHT BE A SIMPLE CLASS, IT'S ELEGANT IN THAT SIMPLICITY, BEING PERHAPS THE MOST CUSTOMIZABLE AND WELL-ROUNDED CLASS IN THE GAME.

WHAT TYPES OF FIGHTERS ARE THERE?

FIGHTERS ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR DISTINCTIVE TRAINING AND SPECIALIZATIONS TO CERTAIN FIGHTING STYLES; THIS THEME IS ONLY FURTHER DEVELOPED THROUGH THE CLASS'S SUBCLASSES, KNOWN AS ARCHETYPES. THREE ARE AVAILABLE IN THE PLAYER'S HANDBOOK: THE BATTLE MASTER IS A STUDIED EXPERT OF WAR, TURNING COMBAT INTO A SCIENCE AS THEY UTILIZE A NUMBER OF MASTERFUL MANEUVERS TO DOMINATE THEIR FOES THROUGH SUPERIOR TACTICS; THE CHAMPION IS A BRAWLER WHO STRIVES TO HONE THEIR BODY TO PEAK PERFECTION, ALLOWING THEM TO LAND CRITICAL HITS EASIER AND SLOWLY REGENERATE THEIR HEALTH WHEN THEY'RE BADLY DAMAGED; FINALLY, THE ELDRITCH KNIGHT PUTS THE 'SORCERY' IN 'SWORDS AND SORCERY', GAINING ACCESS TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF ARCANESPELLS TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR MARTIAL PROWESS. MORE ARCHETYPES CAN BE FOUND IN ADDITIONAL SOURCEBOOKS, BUT THE STANDARD THREE STILL GRANT PLAYERS EVEN MORE OPTIONS TO FURTHER CUSTOMIZE THEIR FIGHTER TO THEIR LIKING, WHICH, IF YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED YET, IS SOMEWHAT OF A CORE THEME OF THIS CLASS.

WHAT DOES A FIGHTER REPRESENT?

WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF A FIGHTER, THEY USUALLY PICTURE JUST SOME BLAND WARRIOR, USUALLY IN PLATE ARMOR, MINDLESSLY WHACKING FOES WITH A SWORD AND HAVING THE PERSONALITY OF A WOODEN BOWL. MINDLESSLY WHACKING FOES WITH A WEAPON IS WHAT A BARBARIAN IS FOR, THOUGH; IF YOU'RE PLAYING A FIGHTER, YOU'RE PLAYING A TRAINED COMBATANT WHO LEARNED TO SWING A BLADE WHEN THEY WERE SIX AND WAS FIRST SENT OFF TO BATTLE WHEN THEY WERE TEN. A WEAPON IS TO A FIGHTER WHAT A PAINTBRUSH IS TO AN ARTIST, WITH DEFT STROKES AND CAREFUL STRIKES TURNING THEIR PIECE OF WOOD AND METAL INTO A BLINDING SPECTACLE OF GLEAMING STEEL. IF YOUR PARTY WANTED SOME DUMB MUSCLE TO SOAK UP HITS FOR THEM, THEY'D BE BETTER OFF SENDING A COW WITH A SWORD TIED TO IT INTO BATTLE; A FIGHTER IS A *TACTICIAN* AND A *SOLDIER*, NOT JUST A WITLESS MEAT-SHIELD. IF YOU REMEMBER THAT MINDSET WHEN MAKING YOUR FIGHTER, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS: ELITE WARRIORS FROM ALL ACROSS HUMAN HISTORY, FROM EUROPEAN KNIGHTS, TO AZTEC JAGUAR WARRIORS, TO MONGOLIAN MOUNTED ARCHERS COULD ALL SERVE AS POTENT SOURCES OF INSPIRATION FOR YOUR FIGHTER. IN ADDITION, CONSIDER THE WEAPON YOUR FIGHTER WIELDS; DO THEY HAVE A SIGNATURE ONE, OR DO THEY SIMPLY USE WHATEVER'S MOST USEFUL AT THE TIME? IF THEY DO HAVE A SIGNATURE WEAPON, HOW DO THEY USE IT? DO THEY HAVE SPECIAL TECHNIQUES, OR DO THEY FAVOR MORE PRAGMATIC STYLES OF FIGHTING? IT IS IN A FIGHTER'S VERY NATURE TO BE CUSTOMIZABLE AND VERSATILE; TO MAKE THEM LITTLE MORE THAN A BORING PIECE OF STALE BREAD IS A DISSERVICE TO BOTH YOU AND THE CLASS ITSELF.

WHY SHOULD YOU PLAY A FIGHTER?

AS MUCH AS I ADVOCATE FOR THE COUNTLESS WAYS A FIGHTER CAN BE MADE INTERESTING AND UNIQUE, EVEN I MUST ADMIT THAT THEY ARE THE MOST SIMPLE CLASS IN THE GAME IN REGARDS TO THEIR MECHANICS. WITH THEIR HIGH HITPOINTS, EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND ABILITIES, AND HIGH NUMBER OF ATTACKS, THIS CLASS IS PERFECT FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO PLAY A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND EFFECTIVE CHARACTER WITH NO COMPLEX MECHANICS OR SPELLS TO BOG DOWN THEIR EXPERIENCE. 'STRAIGHTFORWARD' DOES NOT ALWAYS HAVE TO MEAN 'BORING,' HOWEVER: IN MY EXPERIENCE, I'VE SEEN FIGHTERS DEAL *INSANE* DAMAGE IN A SINGLE TURN THROUGH INTELLIGENT USE OF THEIR VARIOUS ABILITIES AND SOME SOLID ROLLS, BECOMING THE VERITABLE MVPs OF THOSE RESPECTIVE FIGHTS. COMBAT IS ONE OF THE CORE PILLARS OF D&D, AND FIGHTERS ARE MORE THAN EQUIPPED TO BE THE TRUE MASTERS OF IT.

DECEMBER SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Hey there, Spartans! In this Sports Column, you get to hear all about your favorite Spartan teams!

- Our Milford Wrestlers attended the Big Red Tournament in Tyngsboro, MA, where they finished 8th out of 16 teams on December 16. With Kyle Lajoie placing 2nd, Evan O'Connell 3rd, and Eli Wales placing 4th in the tournament, the Spartans did an excellent job overall!
- Our Milford Indoor Track & Field team did phenomenal at their most recent meet, with the Girls' team finishing 7th and the Boys' team finishing 4th. Keely Giordano from the girl's team earned a 1st place finish in the 55 meter dash, while Catriona Carter and Alina St. George finished 6th and 7th respectively in the 300-meter dash. For the boys, Daniel Sixon earned a 1st place finish in the 1000 meter race, Kenyon Sora got a 4th place in the 300 meter race, and Logan Korthals and Will Whitley finished 3rd and 5th respectively in the 1500 meter race. Our Boys' 4x400 relay team finished 1st, while the Girls' placed 2nd. Exceptional job, Spartans!
- On December 15th, our Boys' reserve and JV teams earned a win against Sanborn, with the scores being 38-16 and 54-43 respectively. The Boys' Varsity team fought valiantly, but they unfortunately could not win against Sanborn, with the final score being 62-77. Will O'Connell got a dunk in the 2nd quarter, and Kai Lau Quan had 7 three-pointers.
- On December 19, the Varsity Boys' team picked up a win against the Giants of Bishop Brady with a final score 72-22.
- On December 15th, the Girls' basketball team had a split against Sanborn, with JV losing 29-24 while the Varsity pulled through with a 52-33 win.
- On December 19th, the Varsity girls dominated the Bishop Brady team with a final score of 49-15.
- Congratulations to the Admiral Ice Hockey Team, as they hosted Monadnock on December 21 and picked up an 11-2 victory.

Who's Who?

Our world needs strong leaders. At Milford High School, we believe that high school students can be great leaders now, as well as in the future. This is why we elect our student leaders every year so they can learn how to best serve your needs. Get to know them and don't hesitate to reach out to them.

2023-2024 EXECUTIVE STUDENT COUNCIL

ELECTED ESC OFFICERS:

ESC President – Olivia Rolanti, Class of 2024

ESC Vice President – Rana McCloat, Class of 2025

ESC Secretary – Kamryn Duggins, Class of 2025

ESC Treasurer – Hunter Kolesar, Class of 2025

Student Representative to the School Board - Charles Cevasco, Class of 2024

<https://mhs.milfordk12.org/apps/pages/Student-Publication>

WEST STREET JOURNAL EDITORIAL STAFF '23-'24



We are a group of students who are striving to report school events as well as feature fun stories and topics for the reading pleasure of the Milford High School student body. Feel free to submit your works, ideas and opinions.

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