Grimshaw’s Pedagogy:

I was once a student of philosophy at the formerly respected Miskatonic University under the unfortunate tutelage of professor Grimshaw. To understand the frightening context of this happenstance one must first be familiar with the workings and publications of both Dr. Greene, the university’s world renowned anthro-botanist, and Mr. Peter Burkson, the self-proclaimed experimentalist and logician, for professor Grimshaw drew heavily on both their teachings, the likes of which he tweaked to suit his pedagogical needs.

Grimshaw was a tall dark shadow of a man. He had on him a thin coat of white hair which secured his foreboding visage with a pair of uncouth sideburns that looked as though they wanted to be a beard, but were too old to do so. A dull black suit always molded his withered body into a rectangular fashion and bled into the blackness of his pants and shoes. His face was wizened and his hands were weathered and he altogether rebutted the notion that looks can be deceiving.

At the semester’s beginning Grimshaw explained and dialogued as any other professor would. He was odd and stale but provided me with the necessary information required to learn about the human mind and its processes. However, upon recent enlightenments towards the Burkson trials, Grimshaw’s actions took a turn in a more ethically cryptic direction. He began to pursue at length forbidden notions and obscurisms otherwise unknown, or perhaps *undiscovered,* from the human mind.

Now, one can safely assume that the empiricisms of the lecture hall have since been precipitously investigated and archived, however, one cannot safely assume that any indirect discrepancies stationed in the mind have been accounted for nor hegemonized in any characteristic fashion, be it legal or private. What I mean to say in a less corrugated manner is that there may potentially exist peripheral misgivings of the pedagogy that have a general tendency to worm their way into future mannerisms of the host disguised in morally perplexed quasi-gnomes wielding relatively little short term puissance, yet unimaginable long term potency. In any case, I don’t find myself to be in any immediate danger of this, and have not yet had the resources to see if any of my classmates did, and therefore I am able and willing to continue my oration as to the origin of these effects.

Over the second half of the course Grimshaw revealed to us three radical thought experiments. The first one I remember clearly not because of the grotesqueness that the others portrayed, but the sheer oddity wrapped around the object. I came into class that day and found my gaze lingering towards the professor’s desk, upon which sat none other than a monkey’s paw. It was large and crudely cut at the wrist, assuredly from some great ape of unbeknownst origin, and held an aura of austere anguish. “My students, it seems this object does not treat your minds kindly, why do you think that is?” The ever-reproachful lecture from Grimshaw had begun. “Let’s compare. Does this?” He pulled out a mess of strings and chords which assumedly had once belonged to the inside of a piano. Adjusting the monkey’s paw he meandered on with his supercilious lesson.

“Suppose you fear the monkey’s paw for its rarity in your lives; as with the chords. Suppose you fear the monkey’s paw for its peculiarity in a philosophy classroom; as with the chords. Suppose you fear the monkey’s paw for its separation with its host; as with the chords. Suppose you fear the monkey’s paw for what its made of, something you’re familiar with on a daily basis; as is not with the chords. So I begin to wonder if perhaps you fear the monkey’s paw not for what it is, but for what it reminds you of.”

It was in this abundantly logical manner that professor Grimshaw had managed to churn up my nocturnal curiosities and bend my once rigid mind. He allowed us to touch and eye the objects, although he demanded that our time spent on each must be equal, because to him they were, and during that process I became ever attuned to my emotional pretenses and further developed my inner line of reasoning. It seemed Grimshaw’s pedagogy had a profound impact on my soul.

“Students, the lesson for this week is to separate intrinsics from inherents and to identify their roles in the creation of fear. For these next few days, I beg of you to utterly reject everything you know and feel about morality and let logic be your compass to the truth.” With that he excused us, leaving only that nebulously apprehensive plea for us to wonder as to what could possibly follow a monkey’s paw for the next lesson. Luckily, I didn’t have to wait long. In two days my next philosophy class was back in session.

When I walked in the door I immediately turned to the table with the premonition of some unutterably terrible and infinitesimally grotesque esotericism poised to acquire insatiable dominion over my peace of mind and well-being. In return, rather, Grimshaw’s desk was void of any such object.

“Let the record show that today’s thought experiment causes no harm to you when you are not aware of its presence. Therefore we can deduce that the only harm it causes, if any at all, is merely in your minds—a minor, parallelogramatically cognitive refraction.”

With that, Grimshaw reached under the table and brought up his second thought experiment. In alignment with my trepid prediction, this object conveyed an even greater level of horror than the monkey’s paw. It was so hideous in nature that a handful of students reacted by leaving the hall; the curious ones stayed. And what those curious ones saw, myself included, was a rough cut and bloodied monkey’s *head*. If the paw wasn’t worse enough, now we had this ungodly caricature, this simian satan brought up from the bowels of normality to rid whatever dignity was left in our semi-cordial minds. The very visage analogized some maritime malady of long forgotten origin brought up from the depths at which no man should go in conquest of an antediluvian awakening of which no man should discover.

“Your eyes widen. Your throats contract. Why is this so?” He began pacing, maintaining a calm face. “You didn’t care when you were unaware, so again, the damage is in your mind. And your reactions are more egregious than the paw, yet the paw is as much a body part as the head. It's not the connection to death, I’ll take the privilege in guessing that you all have willingly slaughtered bugs before, and what’s there for you to care more for a monkey than a mayfly? So I begin to think that the problem you students have with this is not just its connection to death, but the connection that it has to the fear of your *own* deaths.”

I tried to reconcile this roundabout explanation, tried to find some truth in it as with the previous. However, there remained some discrepancy, some key fallacy that I sensed, but could not yet overtly detect.

“For those of you who are curious as to why you fear death, and how to overcome that fear, I will be holding one final thought experiment in three days. It’s a simple, yet mind boggling one that will force you to think in ways you never have before. I must warn that it's not for everyone, so be advised as to whether you should come.”

As I made my way to the door I couldn’t stop focusing on my own fears. I dug and dug but found no concrete basis for them, only that I had them. So in heavy defeat, I committed myself to come to the next thought experiment.

In exactly three days' time I found myself back again at the lecture hall. I flicked my pen, played with my hands, and danced my eyes upon the wall until the clock showed that class was to be in session. Yet I remained alone in the room; not Grimshaw nor any student was present. I had heard murmurs from other peers yesterday about how demonstratively destructive the display had been yesterday and that they wouldn’t care to show up for the next, but I thought I might be joined by a select few speculatives. It appeared not.

As for Grimshaw it was quite odd. He was the type to always be early, planning out his class and preparing for the day’s lesson. So what if…Last class’ object had been stowed below the table, maybe today’s was too. Immediately my mind was weighed down by this interjection and all thoughts turned to the table. What horror could be lurking, awaiting my discovery? It pulled me in. This self marauding parallelism that lulled me in all dimensions ever closer to its harborage beneath the table.

Even if Grimshaw wasn’t here, surely he would want me to extend my mind? He had presented me with this subversively malign semi-septum aimed to test my desire for the truth. The past two days had fortified my knowledge of the fact that I had none, but nonetheless retained the hunger to acquire some. Whatever thought experiment it was, I would be able to handle it. Grimshaw had led me to the water, and it was my job to drink it. Therefore, unaware of my luridly sewn fate, I slowly crept around the table and locked eyes with the harrowing vision of *Grimshaw’s head.*