

**UCLA**  
**CSW Update Newsletter**

**Title**

The Glammogr and the Present Inquiry

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1n83h3xj>

**Author**

Wong, Mandy-Suzanne

**Publication Date**

2010-04-01

# THE GLAMMOGR AND THE PRESENT INQUIRY

The raven got into the upstairs drawing room through one of the ornate windows. He cawed a couple of Runes and thus became an elegant young man wearing a doublet. Since he was alone, he lit the fireplace by waving a hand at it. He sat down in a chair, exasperated with the world at large.


Composing fantasy fiction necessarily alters the perspective from which an author considers experience. The following discussion centers on the experience of music, and how said experience may be approached by analysis.

A trying evening it had been indeed. Having stabbed the queen's consort and become that sycophantic individual, Lord Shade the Glammogr—who could take any form he chose,

even when it belonged to someone else—was supposed to persuade Her Majesty to instigate a war with Spain. That was the contract. But the woman refused to make a move, and Lord Shade had no desire to actually participate in wars; they were too time-consuming, not to mention messy.

All forms of writing may be considered performances, as the present inquiry aims to demonstrate.

It was becoming tiresome to have to say, "It was like that all along, Your Majesty," every time he lit the fireplace, just because the Royal Sow did not believe in Magic. To assuage his temper, Lord Shade thought he'd have some music. Of course he had no need of an instrument or the court musicians. He simply wiggled his fingers.



**All forms of writing may be considered performances, as the present inquiry aims to demonstrate.**

Writing about music obliges one to craft a musical experience. Thus, presented in writing, the experience of music is not that of the author-as-listener but of the author-as-author, where the latter makes record of an experience which she has constructed in order to make a point. Hence a written description of John Cage's 4'33" is not equivalent to the experience of 4'33" in a concert hall. One may write "silence," but one cannot write silence. Rather, the construction in writing of a musical experience ("silence, with some creaking of chairs") is the composition and performance of said musical experience. Even as musicological writing must describe and criticize compositions and performances and experiences of other writers, description and criticism are themselves

performance and composition when they constitute musicological writing.

The Glammogr felt the Magic when he summoned it, felt it with a sense that was neither corporeal nor quite telepathic. The Magic came from behind the other mundane elements. It surrounded the air, rose up from underneath the very same. Being scientifically inclined, Lord Shade understood Magic as a substance comprised of infinitesimal yet quantifiable particles. Magical effects were the results of interactions, at the behest of the Wizard's indomitable will, between Magical particles and the equally infinitesimal particles that comprised his soul. Making music was but a matter of persuading the Magical particles to interact with

## One may write “silence,” but one cannot write silence.



the sonic particles latent in the air, such that they would vibrate and produce sounds in the manner dictated by the particles in his soul. To Lord Shade, though lesser minds would have been quite confounded, all this was obvious. It was as self-evident as the air beneath his raven’s wings when he rode updrafts through the clouds. For with that extra sense in the tips of his fingers and the lobes of his ears, the depths of his mind and the very core of his heart, Lord Shade the Glammogr felt the movements of those particles – and more than that: he knew them.

Writing fantasy fiction requires wondering, above all else. The fantasy author crafts not the untrue, but what could be true and, for the characters in the story, what is in fact true. For the author, this crafting is a question. The writer’s craft

is wondering what could be. Writers of musicology speculate similarly: What could music be in various contexts, from various points of view? The crafting of the musicological piece of writing is therefore also a questioning. Here note that the musicologist answers her own inquiries not as instrumentalists and composers would answer them, because the musicologist must respond to wonderment with the written word. Words inquire and may claim confusion outright: these are among the functions of words. Therefore in writing, wonderment itself is an appropriate response to musicological wondering, since writing may perpetuate musicological wonderment. The same applies to propositions made by the fantasy story.

Lord Shade could even close his eyes as he located the sonic particles, enchanted them



**As such, written wonderings of musicology cannot utter value judgments or Absolute Truth. If they could, then writing would not be craft.**

to make them move, and let their movement resonate within him. In his eagerness to escape the trivialities of the court, he bombarded himself with sounds and self-expressions made corpuscular and microscopic. Sounds, brought to life by Magic, ricocheted against blood droplets on their way through his body, shifted the elements of his spirit. The Glammogr opened his eyes.

As such, written wonderings of musicology cannot utter value judgments or Absolute Truth. If they could, then writing would not be craft. Written statements of possibility, fantastic or musicological, should take advantage of that humility.

It came to him, reclining in his favorite chair: Magic and sound were movable by and against the soul. Music and enchantment were related by more than analogy. What insidious power might

sonic particles possess, therefore? What power, that was more than emotional? For example, might some resourceful Wizard galvanize musical particles against the queen's obstinate soul, altering its configuration and with it her opinion of Spain? Music, after all, had Her Majesty's ear as Magic never would. And Lord Shade was renowned for his resourcefulness.

Fantasy-fictional and musicological writing are performance-acts that involve the crafting of experiences to various ends. Wonder drives both kinds of writing, which present possibilities unavailable to other points of view. The aim of the writer is hence in all cases to wonder, thus to question, to think beyond.

The Glammogr rose from his chair. He had experiments to perform.