

REVISITING LUCY GREEN'S THEORY OF MUSICAL MEANING

I do not believe in coincidences. Or, rather, it seems to me worth holding on to those moments when different worlds collide. I have recently been thinking (again) about Lucy Green's theory of musical meaning, as put forward in *Music on deaf ears*¹. Green divides the realm of musical meaning into two: *inherent* (broadly the relationships which sounds are construed as making one with another - pp.12ff.) and *delineated* (broadly the relationships we make between those sounds and the extra-musical world - pp.26ff.) There are two aspects of her theorization which improve on the 'standard model' (e.g. Leonard Meyer's formulation of *absolute* and *referential* modes of meaning²). The first is the near-autonomous nature of the development of inherent meanings (which is how I read the quasi-autonomy of style change), a matter with which she would again disagree with Meyer³, although his definition of *style* is decidedly non-standard. The second is her characterization of the *inherent* and the *delineated* as *virtual* moments, by which I take her to mean that the distinction is one made in theory, but that during the act of listening, the two realms of meaning exist as one.

I recently encountered a new book by the philosopher of science Alan Chalmers: *Science and its fabrication*⁴. Chalmers achieved notoriety a decade or so ago for his version of the attack on the apparent value-free status of scientific research. In this latest book, he is concerned not only to refute (what he calls...) the extreme empiricism of the positivists, but equally the extreme empiricism of sceptical radical sociologists (refutations of rationalist positions being taken as read). He argues that the material criticisms the sociologists⁵ have of scientific practice would be shared even by Popper and Lakatos, scholars whom they universally condemn. Chalmers, also, is critical of Popper (for his proximity to the positivist position), and develops his thesis in an interesting fashion. He claims that there are two modes of

