Title: The Nature of Auditory Perceptual Experience

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Abstract:

We commonsensically take it that one of the functions of perception is to enable one to enter in cognitive contact with a variety of elements populating one’s environment, including events in which ordinary material objects participate. The case of auditory perception poses a challenge to accommodate this function: a set of phenomenological considerations, which seem to suggest that we undergo experiences of sounds divorced from the material events that might count as their sources, raises the question as to how awareness of sounds enables cognitive contact with ordinary material objects in the world. One approach to addressing this question, found in the literature, is to define the ontological relation between sounds and events in which ordinary material objects participate and, consequently, to derive an account of auditory perception. I put forward a reading of the challenge which is not addressed by this approach. I will argue that there is a puzzle about the nature of auditory perceptual experience which purports to show that sounds sufficiently determine what it is like to undergo an auditory perceptual experience and exclude events in which objects participate from playing a role. After providing some motivation for the puzzle and addressing some worries, I will conclude by pointing to the direction of my solution to the puzzle.