

PUBLIC SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW FOR THE AWARDING OF NO. 8 EXPERIENCED GRANTS LASTING 36 MONTHS AND NO. 2 EARLY STAGE GRANTS LASTING 12 MONTHS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH PURSUANT TO ART. 22 OF LAW NO. 240/2010 AT THE DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME CALLED "STARS SUPPORTING TALENTED RESEARCHER" - ACTION 1 FOR THE YEAR 2019-2021 - 1^a TRANCHE - TYPE A - (CUP: F56C18000670001)

announced with decree of the Chancellor Rep. no. 126/2019 of 28.02.2019 and posted on the official registry of the University on 28.02.2019

CODE N. 9

RESEARCH PROJECT

"Perceiving sound structures: toward a general metaphysics of auditory objects"

Research structure: Department of Letters, Philosophy, Communication

Duration of the grant: 12 months

Scientific Area: 11 – History, philosophy, pedagogy and psychology

Academic recruitment field: 11/C1 – Theoretical philosophy

Academic discipline: M-FIL/01 – Theoretical philosophy

Scientific Director: Prof. Aggr. DAVIES Richard William

At the intersection of two recently completed projects (Bianchi and Davies 2018; and Davies 2019), the research focuses on the metaphysics of sound structures as perceived in various contexts of hearing, with particular reference to groupings of sounds as encountered in music as well as in the commoner communicative circumstance of oral speech.

The project is articulated under two headings:

1) On the one hand, an analysis will be given of groupings of sounds that are typically employed in musical compositions in the Western tradition. Starting from phenomenological studies of the aggregation and separation of musical notes, the aim is to clarify the relations that hold between notes and more complex sound groupings with a view to identifying metaphysical status of sound structures. The hypothesis is advanced of a crucial role for the capacity to discriminate the beginning and end of a sound structure and hence to grasp its inner articulation with its consequences for the understanding of a musical discourse (Martina and Voltolini 2018). Among the markers of this sort of structuring, pauses are a fundamental feature, which leads us to interrogate the very nature of silence (Sorensen 2009), taking into account such extreme cases as John Cage's 4'33".

2) The other main theme is the analysis of how sound groupings articulate linguistic discourse. Attending to the auditory perception of spoken language, rather than the understanding of it in terms of content and function, we are faced with the double challenge of not only distinguishing minimum units of the perception of the utterance of a linguistic element but also of individuating the structure that it belongs to. The aim is to understand the composition of the linguistic sound structures and to give a metaphysical account of them and of their relations to the minimal units of a spoken linguistic message (whether this be a phoneme, a word or a structure made up of more than one element). Pauses and silences likewise have a role in the articulation of speech as much as punctuation has a fundamental role in written language. The intention therefore is to understand the role of silences in auditory linguistic structures.

The methods of enquiry adopted are: 1) a review of the psychological, cognitive-scientific and philosophical literature on hearing so as to pick out the sound structures to be taken into account; 2) a study of the literature on the metaphysics of perceived auditory objects and their interrelations; 3) a comparative analysis of visual cases, which are more present and more widely discussed in the scholarly literature. Thus Nudds (2001) proceeds by pointing out analogies and disanalogies between the visual perception of a hole in a mint (citing Martin 1992) and the auditory perception of a gap/silence, with a view to arguing for the ability of hearing to provide spatial information; in the same vein, it seems

profitable to set up parallels on the metaphysical plane between clearly visual objects such as holes (Bertamini and Casati 2012, to whom Calabi responds in her 2019), and their most immediate correlates in hearing: silences and pauses.

Research into the aforementioned topics should last about a year, with openings for further development of broader theories about the world of sounds than are currently available, centering on cases of the perception of sound elements in the environment.

Even though the project falls into two main parts the aim is bring them into contact in the light of the bibliographic research and the elaboration of a *status quæstionis* (4 months). The conceptual analysis and the proposal of a basic taxonomy of auditory objects (4 months) will permit the composition of one or more scientific articles to be proposed to international scholarly journals (4 months).