

On Privations and their Perception*

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Abstract

Despite its admirable bottom-up methodology, Roy Sorensen's *Seeing Dark Things* (OUP, 2008) raises difficult theoretical questions concerning the metaphysics and perception of absences. Metaphysical difficulties include how to individuate, count, locate, and classify absences, and what determines their features. Perceptual difficulties include how to distinguish experiences of absences and presences, especially when nonveridical, and what subjects contribute to perceptual experience according to Sorensen's causal theory. In addition to articulating these difficulties, this paper also presents and explores, on Sorensen's terms, an alternative account of silence.

Keywords

Absences, silence, sound, perceptual awareness

1 Introduction

1.1 Opening remarks

Roy Sorensen's *Seeing Dark Things* (OUP, 2008) is an immensely impressive book. It is disarmingly creative, thoroughly original, and uniformly challenging. It is accessible, but it is deceptively difficult. Sometimes it is maddening. I learned a tremendous amount in reading it, including that, in principle, a shadow could move faster than light speed (Sorensen 2008, 41).¹

The book's framework is a series of puzzles about perceptible absences. Sorensen uses these puzzles to develop a series of counterintuitive theses. The result is a powerful story about the metaphysics and perception of absences. While it includes discussion of holes and of silence, the focus is *dark things*, or absences of light such as shadows, and things mistaken for dark things.

Several reviewers and commentators have focused on the details of the most central puzzles concerning shadows, eclipses, silhouettes, spinning shadows, colored shadows, blackness, and darkness.² Jonathan Westphal focuses on some of these attractively fresh cases in his contribution. I suspect many future discussions will take them up, too. So, my focus will differ.

I have three aims. First, I want to give a sense of the great scope of this work. Second, I want to discuss some of its metaphysical and perceptual assumptions, conclusions, and consequences, and to raise some questions about them. Third, I want to engage Sorensen on terrain that is most familiar to me, concerning hearing, sounds, and silence, and to issue some replies.

Because I raise these concerns in a more general, theoretical manner than does *Seeing Dark Things*, some of my discussion will appear at odds with Sorensen's admirable bottom-up methodology (19). While I wholeheartedly endorse this methodology, in particular as a starting point, the theoretical questions are now worth asking, if only to assess and reflect upon costs.

1.2 Central theses

To give those of you who have not yet read the entire book a sense of how surprising and original it is, and as a refresher to others, here is a small sampling of central claims Sorensen defends.³

Sometimes when you see an object, you do not see the surface that faces you, but instead see the far surface facing away from you. This is what happens when you see a silhouette—the silhouette is not the outline, but the far surface of the object blocking the light.

Something completely, if exactly, blocked by another object is visible. When you encounter a perfect double eclipse, in which two blocking objects align with a light source and coincide perfectly from your perspective, you see the far blocking object rather than the near one.

Shadow is a causal concept, like *footprint*, and shadows are individuated in terms of their causes, their light-blockers. Being effects, shadows can outlast their casters.

Shadows are non-material, three-dimensional holes in the light, rather than merely dark spots on surfaces. Shadows themselves have surfaces. They can be (absolutely) hollowed out. Shadows can spin even when perfectly round. Two distinct shadows can coincide at the same location. One shadow can completely surround another.

Shadows lack true reflections.

Shadows are black; black is a color; but shadows never have a hue. The color black marks the absence of hue or chromaticity and light. But sensations of blackness differ from absences of sensation.

If you cannot see hues, you cannot see in black and white. Trichromats see more than monochromats, even when nothing in a scene has hue. In her black and white room, Jackson's Mary sees the absence of red and thus has the concept *red*.

Night is the earth's shadow.

Humans have two visual systems: one for seeing in the day; one for seeing at night.

You can see in complete darkness, since experiencing complete darkness differs from failing to see. In general, representing an absence differs from the absence of representation.

Darkness has a color: black.

Sometimes you hear without hearing a sound, since sometimes you hear silence. Hearing silence differs from failing to hear. While darkness has color, silence has no sound. Silence has location, and you can hear silence at a distance.

There is no sensation of silence.

1.3 The master argument

Sorensen arrives at these theses on surprisingly simple grounds. Here is one way to put his master argument.

1. A causal theory of perception is true.⁴
2. Causation can occur by omission and by prevention.
3. Absences can be causes and effects.
4. Sometimes material things and events cause absences.
5. Sometimes absences cause sense impressions, perceptual states, or experiences in an appropriate way.
6. Sometimes we perceive (see, hear, touch) absences.

2 Metaphysical issues

According to Sorensen, absences are *privational* or *negative* phenomena, and they commonly are *parasitic*. Each is the absence of something or other.

As a result, *Seeing Dark Things* denies some venerable metaphysical theses. For instance, according to Sorensen, absences are non-material. So, not all is material and positive, since absences are neither. Materialism fails (189).

It also constrains options for a theory of causation. Since privations are non-physical but can be causes, causation does not require a *physical process* that runs from cause to effect. Lewis (2004), whom Sorensen cites in support of the claim that absences can be causes and effects, thus argues that causation by an absence (death by the void) requires a *counterfactual theory* of causation and shows that causation is not a *relation* between distinct *events*.⁵

In this section, I want to raise a set of questions and concerns about admitting privational, parasitic phenomena.

2.1 Feature sharing

Shadows are black; shadows have spatial properties. Material objects are black; material objects have spatial properties. Thus, absences and material objects *share* features. How can attributes be attributes both of the positive and of the negative? How is this compatible with the claim that “Shadows ...are absences that can only have properties in a negative way” (190)? Does this require distinguishing *having* properties from *ways* of having properties?

2.2 Explosion and individuation

The descent into darkness leads quite far. Absences are remarkably pervasive. How pervasive?

Seeing Dark Things takes on absences of light, hue, matter, and sound. These are different kinds of absence. (Different *ontological* kinds?) It mentions many other varieties of absence: of fish, inebriation, liquid, money, health, and dryness (217).

“Absences affect all ontological categories” (189).

And there are absent absences (227), as the unsuccessful Swiss cheese maker demonstrates. I suspect this repeats—imagine the surprise at the lack of absent holes in the previously unsuccessful Swiss cheese maker’s first unfrustrated effort.

I suspect these absences are overlapping and nearly everywhere. For instance, birds commonly coincide with absences of dogs, cats, and trombones.

My concern isn’t just about admitting these many many absences. The worry is how to locate, count, and classify them.

Sometimes, absences are individuated *causally* (as with shadows), or by their *hosts* (as with holes), according to Sorensen. But what about other absences, such as an absence of salt, an absence of pigeons, or an absence of Elvis? Are these absences counted and characterized by items or tokens, or by kinds or types, of which they are the absence?

A natural thought is that absences “mirror”, in a negative way, the corresponding positive things. So, the absences of salt and of Elvis are negative images of salt and of Elvis. This helps only so much.

First, consider the thought that absences generally have locations (as do holes and shadows). How do we determine the location of an absence, generally? Suppose, reasonably, that an absence is located where the presence is not, or where it might have been. But, then, is the absence of Elvis located everywhere Elvis is not? Or are there many absences of Elvis, located in each Elvis-sized region? Is the absence of a fish everywhere that lacks fish, or only in individual fish-sized regions? What about the absence of pudding? Is it everywhere that lacks pudding, or only in individual serving-sized regions? What are the spatio-temporal boundaries of such absences? How do we count them?

There are more difficult questions about how to count absences. In a given fish-sized region, is there a separate absence for each missing fish? Do such absences overlap positive things of the matching kind? For instance, the absence of one specific Coke can

might overlap the presence of another specific Coke can, even if not the absence of Coke cans.

Next, consider how to classify absences. Absences sometimes are individuals (as are shadows) and sometimes are properties (as is blackness). But whether an absence is an individual or a property is not determined by whether that of which it is an absence is an individual or a property. A shadow is not the absence of an individual, it is the absence of light. The absence of Elvis arguably is a property or a fact, while Elvis is an individual. Fish is a natural kind, but an absence of fish is not a natural kind.⁶

So, how should we locate, count, and classify absences?

I quickly lose my grip on how to approach these sorts of questions. This might be why Lewis (2004) worries only about the void, an absolute absence.

3 Perceptual issues

According to Sorensen, absences and their features are perceptible. Sorensen assumes a causal theory of perception, and absences stand in the right sorts of causal relations to perceivers.

Absences also appear to share features with material things. Both shadows and surfaces look black; shadows and objects appear to have locations and boundaries. Since absences do possess such properties, absences and material things do not just appear to match. We *see* their common features.

Furthermore, Sorensen argues that absences may be experienced in just the same way as, and thus mistaken for, positive things—the visual system lacks the means to distinguish and mark negative and positive things *as such*.⁷ Nevertheless, matching visual experiences caused by an object and an absence, respectively, count as *seeing* different things.

Sorensen does not discuss at length what the *subject* contributes to the causal relation constitutive of seeing—that is, about the relevant *effects*. He does, however, clearly favor

a strongly *externalist* account of seeing, for absences and otherwise. What is seen depends predominantly upon features of the cause, rather than upon particular features of the internal state of the subject that is caused, including how things *seem* to the subject. For instance, seeing something *F* does not require being affected by it in a *distinctive* experiential manner, since it does not require being able to distinguish it from non-*F*s. Perceptual experiences that are indistinguishable to their owners thus may involve seeing different things or kinds of things when their causes differ.

Sorensen couples the causal theory of perception with Dretske's influential distinction between epistemic and non-epistemic seeing. He says we see absences in the non-epistemic sense, rather than just epistemically, or in a way that requires belief or inference.

3.1 Interposing a light source

Sometimes this picture generates surprising results.

Suppose we have a double eclipse. Interpose an unlit light source between the two blockers, Far and Near. According to *Seeing Dark Things* we see the far surface of Far, the far object. Light the source. Do we now see Near? Repeat switching the source off and on quickly, over and over again. Is it that easy to (undetectedly) change whether you see Far or Near? Sorensen's account implies yes.

3.2 Silhouettes and occlusion shapes

Sometimes plausible alternatives exist that help preserve commonsense without challenging the picture.

Sorensen argues that seeing an object in silhouette is seeing its far surface (ch 2).

When you look at a penny straight on, it appears circular. When you look at it from the side, it has an elliptical appearance, but you still perceive it to be circular. When you approach an object, it fills a larger portion of your visual field, but does not seem to grow. Some philosophers respond to perspectival variation in appearance (despite perceptual

shape and size constancy), but against sense-data or sensation theorists, by claiming that, in addition to seeing the shapes and sizes of things, we perceive *relational* features, such as *occlusion shape* and *occlusion size*.⁸ The occlusion shape of an object is the shape it occludes on a plane perpendicular to a line of sight from a given geometrical point (of view)—shape *from here*. One sees objective perspectival occlusion shapes and sizes in addition to seeing the shapes and sizes of things. Some philosophers think one sees the shapes and sizes of things in virtue of seeing their relational perspectival shapes and sizes.

A silhouette experience might involve seeing an object by seeing only its occlusion shape. If so, is a silhouette just an object's occlusion shape from a given perspective?⁹

3.3 Misperceiving absences

Sometimes it is not obvious how to reconcile commitments without reshaping the picture.

Seeing Dark Things admits illusion and hallucination for shadows, holes, and silence (perceptible absences). The account is committed to something like the following.

Hallucination: Sometimes, one seems to see an F , where F is a type of absence, but one does not see an F , or anything at all, since nothing appropriately causes the experience as of an F . You can dream or have isolated hallucinations of shadows and holes. *Illusion*: Sometimes, one seems to see that a is F , where either a or F is an absence, and one sees either a or F , but one does not see that a is F , because it is false that a 's being F appropriately causes the experience as of a 's being F . For instance, one might misperceive a shadow's size, misperceive an object as black, or misperceive a hole as empty.

So, seeing must be distinguished from seeming to see or merely having a visual experience. Seeing requires success. One usual way to characterize veridicality and misperception appeals to something about candidate perceptual states—either sensations, representations, contents, or appearances of some sort. An experience is veridical just if one of these states of the subject is caused in the appropriate way by the corresponding things and features in the environment. So, illusion and hallucination involve subjects'

being in states—involving sensations, experiences, or representations—that are, in better circumstances, caused by the presence of a given thing or feature, but which fail to satisfy at least the causal requirement.

Sorensen allows that a subject might find indistinguishable perceiving an absence, perceiving a presence, misperceiving an absence, misperceiving a presence, and failing to perceive. Privations, presences, sensory deprivations, temporary deafness or blindness, illusions, hallucinations, and shut eyes might all have indistinguishable effects for a subject.

In what follows, I want to focus on three kinds of cases: hallucinations of absences; illusorily experiencing a featural absence, such as the color quality black or the property of being empty; and illusorily perceiving something as an absence. I won't consider illusorily attributing positive features like size to an absence.

We now can ask the question. How do we determine when a subject hallucinates or misperceives an *absence*, in one of the ways just described? The problem is that subjectively indistinguishable states regularly result from absences and from non-absences. Suppose you're in such a state, and that it is not appropriately caused by an absence. What makes it a non-veridical absence experience, rather than a non-veridical experience as of something positive?

An example will help illustrate. Take Sorensen's (this volume) Figure 8: Hermann's grid illusion. Here is my worry, applied to this case. What makes this a non-veridical experience as of a shadow (a negative individual) rather than a non-veridical experience as of some ink (a positive individual)? There's no ink and there's no shadow. And there's nothing inherent to the experience to settle the matter.

If subjects cannot discern a difference between perceiving an absence of a certain sort and perceiving some material thing or positive feature, and if these states in fact differ just due to their causes, then this challenges the claim that one can misperceive that sort of absence, if doing so differs from misperceiving the corresponding presence. Without the appropriate causal relation to distinguish the states, nothing does. The question is why

misperceiving an absence of that sort, in one of the senses described three paragraphs above, differs from hallucinating an indistinguishable positive thing.

This issue concerns how to individuate representations or visual experiences as of absences. In particular, what's needed is a story about what makes some state a representation or awareness as of an absence when it is not appropriately caused by an absence. What makes the trouble is absence perceptions that are to their subjects indistinguishable from non-absence perceptions and from non-perceptions.

This question about the reasons for thinking we hallucinate and misperceive absences is a roundabout way to ask what the subject contributes to perceiving according to Sorensen's version of the causal theory. What are the features of the states that are constitutive of perceiving when appropriately caused? My concern is that allowing subjectively indistinguishable states to count as perceptions of negative or positive kinds of things makes it difficult to tell a story about hallucinating absences in such cases. Since Sorensen suggests that our perceptual systems do not mark absences as such, this could be a great many cases. Such a story about non-veridical absence experiences might be crucial to capturing the appearance-reality gap needed to establish that absences are objective phenomena.

4 Hearing, sounds, and silence

It is common to think that sounds are *the* immediate objects of hearing, in that whenever and whatever you hear, you hear by or in virtue of hearing a sound. One way to understand this entails: at any time you hear, you hear a sound. Sorensen argues that we hear silence, and that silence is the absence of sounds. So, there are times at which it is true that we hear while hearing no sounds.¹⁰

In what follows, I don't want to argue about whether one can hear without hearing sounds, or about whether we hear silence. I'll assume we hear silence.

So, suppose there is silence. Suppose it is a privation of sound. This does not settle the nature of silence.

4.1 Silences as wave absences

Suppose, with Sorensen, that sounds are *pressure waves*. Waves are patterns of movement in a medium. Silence is an absence of sounds. So silence is the absence of movement in a medium, either by stillness or by vacuum.

Insufficiency of stillness

According to Sorensen, however, stillness or absence of movement does not suffice for silence. The stillness caused by complete *destructive interference* is not silence. Instead, it is the additive presence of multiple sounds. The perceptual experience that stems from such stillness is of merely apparent silence. Hearing two sounds that cancel entirely differs from hearing silence. So, active “noise canceling” headphones just add to the noise you hear rather than eliminate it. Sometimes two sounds are indistinguishable from none.

Whether a sound wave exists at a place therefore is not determined just by what happens locally at that place. So, whether a place is silent depends on more than what doesn't happen locally at that place.¹¹ This raises more good questions about how to locate, count, and classify silence and related phenomena.

Locating silence

What is the location of silence?

Start by considering the locations of sounds. If an absence of sound waves means silence, then silence is located wherever there are no waves.

Given Sorensen's account of silence as an absence of sound waves, silence might exist in a vast three-dimensional expanse or a volume. Or, it might form a still *hole* in the movement of a medium (or a hole in the medium itself). So, there are silent analogs of shade. A silent area might have a surface and dimensions.

But mediums come in many forms. A brick is a medium. If a medium is not transmitting sound waves, does its volume count as silent? If a brick hollows out a shadow, does it hollow out a sound and harbor silence? Or can it also hollow out silence?

Sound blockers and silhouettes

Sometimes things block sound waves. When you wear soundproof over-the-ear headphones (or use earplugs), they create silence at each of your ears. But suppose a source generates sound waves, which are blocked by a piece of sound-absorbent material. While sound waves bend around the edges (as with light) and intrude by reflection, behind the material there could be some volume of silence.

Are there perceptible sound blockers? Dolphins and bats have exceptional spatial hearing and can detect spatial features of objects at a distance. Could dolphins and bats hear the *silhouette* of the blocker? Would dolphins and bats then hear the far surface of the blocker? Perhaps subjects immersed in the silence behind the blocker hear the blocker because it causes what they experience (the absence of sound). Or is this case more like failing to see an object when seeing the shadow it causes?

Are there *silence makers*? This raises questions about the metaphysics of silence. Are some silences individuated *causally*, in the manner of shadows? Suppose we put sound sources on opposite sides of a room whose surfaces are covered in soundproofing. Suppose we add two blockers between the two sound sources, which results in a silent spot between them. Do we have overlapping silences—absences of separate sounds? Another way to ask about the individuation of silences is by considering their survival conditions. Does seamlessly replacing a blocker generate a new silence?

4.2 Locating sounds and silence

Sorensen agrees with the science-based account that sounds are waves in a medium. So, an absence of sound waves means silence, and that silence is located only where there are no waves.

This account of sounds, and thus of silence, is not mandatory. I think that sounds are located roughly where their sources are located, and that sounds are stationary relative to their sources.¹² Sound waves on this account simply transmit information about sounds and enable perception of sounds at a distance.

Sorensen defends the traditional wave account of sounds by defusing worries stemming from locational hearing. Sorensen suggests we answer the question, “Where is it?” for sounds informatively by identifying their *centers*, or where they come from. A sound is like a rapidly expanding balloon. But, since we can’t perceive its overall three-dimensional volume or its boundaries, we substitute the location of its source as a proxy when talking about the sound’s location. ‘The location of a sound’ behaves like ‘the location of an earthquake’, which we take to refer to the epicenter. But, this is not just limited to talk. Perceptual analogs of Gricean maxims of quality and informativeness lead to *locational phenomenology* for spatial hearing. Since hearing can’t “say” anything else about the locations of sounds, it says they’re located where their sources are located (282–4).

Of course, hearing *might* have been able to say something about the three-dimensional voluminous shapes of rapidly-expanding sounds, as vision does of an explosion’s smoke or a tidal wave. That would have meant different auditory phenomenology—a difference in what was heard.

Moreover, the edges and boundaries of sound waves are detectable (though not all at once). You detect them when you begin or cease to hear a sound. Whenever you hear a sound, you know its waves are *here*, even if you don’t experience it *to be located* here. If you move to the other side of the room and continue to hear it, you detect the waves that are *there*.¹³

Experiencing sounds to be located where their sources are located therefore implies that audition does take a stand on where sounds are located. You hear sounds to be located where they originate. When you hear a sound to be located where it originates, that is not where its waves are located. This is why Pasnau (1999) argued that humans

ordinarily misperceive the locations of sounds, if sounds are waves. If sounds travel through the air like the waves, then we undergo locational illusion. In contrast, an earthquake (283) feels like it's happening right here (and we thus have good reason to think it *is*). So, on the wave account, spatial audition systematically misinforms about the locations of the sounds we hear, by underspecifying and by telling us where they're not. Given a plausible alternative, I prefer to avoid ascribing such a systematic illusion.

4.3 Silences as event absences

I hold that sounds are events in which objects or interacting bodies disturb or set into motion a surrounding medium.¹⁴ If I want to accept silences, and silence is the absence of sound, I should say that silence is the absence of an event in which a medium is disturbed by the activity of vibrating or interacting objects. Wherever no object vibrates in the presence of a medium and thereby disturbs it, there is no sound. The object, medium, or disturbing might be absent. So there is silence.

According to this alternative account of silence, if a potential sound source fails to disturb a medium, it fair to say it is non-derivatively silent. So, in one sense, silence can be a *property* of potential sources.¹⁵ Still things are silent, and things in vacuums are silent. This is a common use of the term 'silent', as in, 'The bell is now silent' (this allows that the drum is sounding).

Furthermore, just as Sorensen's account of silence does, this alternative account allows that a *volume* might count as completely silent. Suppose a volume, of whatever extent, contains no sound events. Then it is silent. We are welcome to talk about the sizes and boundaries of such volumes. Regions, rooms, and vacuums can be silent in this sense. This is another common use of the term 'silent', as in, 'The room is silent'.

When such a region also contains no sound waves, this is uncontroversial. However, the absence of a sound event in a region does not guarantee the absence of sound waves. So, a volume might be silent *whether or not* it contains sound waves. This is a noteworthy difference. Consider Sorensen's concert auditorium (285). During the concert, the portion of the auditorium that contains the audience might remain silent. At a

concert, we want sounds only where there are musicians, not elsewhere. Elsewhere, we want silence.

This implies that you could be near a loud speaker and be at a soundless location. Of course, pragmatic considerations count against saying that. Given this, I suspect there is a third sense in which a location can be silent. A place is silent in this sense whenever no sounds are *audible* from or within it. So, no place inside the concert auditorium is silent during a performance.

In light of this, I both agree and disagree with Sorensen about destructive interference. Subjects who occupy locations where destructive interference cancels wave motion seem not to hear the nearby sounds. However, I disagree that such subjects hear *two* sounds (286–7). Instead, they *fail* to hear either of the two distinct sounds located nearby. Waves transmit information about sounds, and waves that cancel fail to transmit information about their sounds to subjects. Nevertheless, I do agree that such subjects are not in entirely silent *regions*. A couple of sounds are in *the room* and could be heard if not for the destructive interference—they're even audible from nearby. Finally, I disagree that such subjects occupy *locations* that are not silent. For one, since no sounds are made in the local region immediately surrounding the subject, that region is silent. And, since no sounds are *audible* from the point where the waves cancel, it too counts as a silent place, in the third sense above.

4.4 Hearing other sonic absences

Last question: What, beyond silence, are the other varieties of audible absence? For instance, is noise an audible absence of pitch, or is pitch an audible absence of noise?

5 In closing

Sorensen has opened up a vast (if not well lit) terrain for philosophical inquiry. *Seeing Dark Things* is an astounding book.

Notes

*This commentary was prepared for the author meets critics session on Roy Sorensen's *Seeing Dark Things* at the 2010 Central Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association. Thanks to Roy Sorensen and Jonathan Westphal for correspondence and discussion.

¹All subsequent page references are to Sorensen (2008).

²See, for instance, Aranyosi (2008); Lowe (2008); Phillips (2009).

³What follows are my characterizations, not quotations.

⁴Causing a sense impression or perceptual state, experience, or representation in the right way is necessary and sufficient for being perceived.

⁵Beebe (2004) denies absences can cause or be caused. Rather, absences can figure in causal *explanations* without being causes or effects.

⁶The absence of an object is not an object, and the absence of an event is not an event, but a property absence nevertheless might be a property.

⁷It is then worth asking how the early visual system makes use of shadows to grasp the structure of objects.

⁸See, e.g., Harman (1990), Noë (2004, ch 3) on perspectival properties.

⁹This type of account might explain why you don't notice the earlier shift between seeing Far and Near, since their occlusion shapes and sizes match.

¹⁰Nevertheless, it is possible to maintain that sounds are the only immediate objects of perception while allowing for silence perception. Suppose hearing silence requires hearing sounds *at other times*, so that one perceives silence by or in virtue of perceiving non-simultaneous sounds.

¹¹This feature of Sorensen's account doesn't strike me as mandatory. Why not accept an absence of sound given the absence of local motion? Then lack of motion would suffice for silence. Resolving the issue turns on the nature of waves and sounds.

¹²See O'Callaghan (2007, 2010).

¹³This, however, does not imply that it is *trivial* that *the sound itself* is in the air around *here* (282)—sound waves might carry information about sounds, as light carries information about surfaces.

¹⁴I've developed this account in O'Callaghan (2007). Casati and Dokic (1994) advance a similar account of sounds as distal events, but require no medium and thus allow sounds in a vacuum.

¹⁵On one way to read Kulvicki (2008), there is no silence in this sense because sounds are standing dispositions of objects. Instead, he would say silence is the failure to *make* or manifest a sound, rather than the absence of sound.

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