MTO 20.4 Examples: Beate Kutschke, Sign Systems

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

Figure 1. Variants of the discourse on ineffability and impeded access to ‘the world’

a) The meaning of music is ineffable in verbal language.
   Meaning: music is ‘deficient’ and ‘mysterious’ at the same time
   Type of discourse: none, analogue construction

b) The meaning of verbal language is ineffable in music.
   Meaning: verbal language is ‘deficient’
   Type of discourse: none, analogue construction

c) The arts are unable to ‘be expressed’ by verbal language.
   Meaning: the arts are ‘deficient’
   Type of discourse: none, analogue construction

d) Ineffability consists of the ‘inability’ of verbal language to ‘express’ the meaning of art.
   Meaning: verbal language is ‘deficient’ because the arts are overwhelmingly full of meaning
   Type of discourse: cultural-critical

e) The use of signs reduces or limits an adequate, immediate, and authentic access to the world.
   Meaning: sign procedures are ‘deficient’ in comparison to the complete, full experience and perception of
   the authentic world, i.e., physical reality
   Type of discourse: cultural-critical

f) The consumption of psychedelic drugs and meditation provides immediate access to the authentic world.
   Meaning: individual cultural practices ‘counter-act’ the ‘deficiency’ of verbal language
   Type of discourse: cultural-critical

g) Unlike socio-culturally developed, i.e., artificial signs, natural signs do not reduce or limit an
   adequate, immediate, and authentic access to the world.
   Meaning: natural signs are not ‘deficient’
   Type of discourse: cultural-critical

h) Art works that do not operate as signs exhibit and emphasize the materiality of the sign and
   provide immediate access to the authentic world.
   Meaning: those art works are not ‘deficient’
   Type of discourse: aesthetic-philosophical

i) Music is a language for more exactly sign system] that we speak [use] and understand, but cannot
   translate [into verbal language].
   Meaning: music is ‘deficient’ and ‘mysterious’ at the same time
   Type of discourse: music-aesthetic

j) Verbal language is a language [for more exactly sign system] that we speak and understand, but
   cannot translate [into music].
   Meaning: verbal language is ‘deficient’
   Type of discourse: none, analogue construction
Figure 2. Sign procedures based on similarity

Figure 3. Referential relationship implied if listeners attribute to music the label ‘fanfare’

The sign user attributes to a), b) and c) that it...

a) Trumpet

...denotes c) because it is labeled ‘fanfare’

...refers to c) on the basis of the construction of similarities

b) Fanfare

Word

c) Fanfare

Concept of fanfare:
A signal used for...
Example 1. Brahms, Piano Quartet op. 60, no. 3, opening

Example 2. Stravinsky, Orphée, opening
New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1948