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Communicological Mediation of Experimental Film

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Abstract

This paper proposes and demonstrates Perceptual-Epistemic-Film-Analysis (PEFA) as a methodological framework for analysing experimental film as a mode of communication, perception and knowledge production. Its aim is to develop a systematic procedure for examining how audiovisual form not only communicates experience but actively organises what can become perceptible and knowable. Rather than treating film primarily as an object of interpretation, PEFA approaches audiovisual form as a potential research operation through which fragmented, embodied, affective, spatial and temporal dimensions of experience can become perceptible, communicable and potentially knowable. The framework addresses the following research question: What can audiovisual mediation make perceptible and knowable that conventional discursive communication cannot fully articulate? This paper brings together three interconnected analytical dimensions (PEFA): the communicative, which examines how audiovisual form organises relations among filmmaker, subject, space and spectator; the perceptual, which examines what audiovisual form makes perceptible and experienceable; and the epistemic, which asks what may become knowable through these perceptual experiences. Its methodological chain is communicative situation-communicative operation – perception – epistemic potential – knowledge. Within this framework, fragmentation, montage, duration, rhythm, sound, voice, gesture, silence, spatial displacement and embodied movement are analysed as communicative operations, rather than merely aesthetic devices. The methodology is developed through two complementary cases with distinct methodological functions. Chantal Akerman's News from Home (1977) serves as an analytical-generative case, through which communicative, perceptual and epistemic operations are identified and conceptually formulated. The film's tension between letters from the filmmaker's mother in Belgium and prolonged images of New York demonstrates how distance, absence, voice, urban space and duration can become perceptually and epistemically significant through their audiovisual relations. The second case, the Croatian experimental film Supergirl, Pula (Matija Debeljuh, 2026), provides a practice-based methodological demonstration, applying the proposed framework to a contemporary Croatian audiovisual work for the first time in this methodological context. Recontextualising the myth of Europa (The Abduction by Zeus) through contemporary experiences of peripheral urbanity, mobility, displacement and

estrangement, the film demonstrates how PEFA can be used through filmmaking and extended beyond examples of experimental film. The thematic field of inner and outer exile provides the context in which the methodological capacity of PEFA is tested. Outer exile refers to geographical, cultural and spatial displacement, while inner exile concerns affective and embodied experiences of estrangement from place, identity, memory and visibility. Across the two cases, the analysis indicates that audiovisual operations can produce forms of embodied, affective, spatial and relational knowledge that are not necessarily reducible to discursive or propositional articulation. The two cases consequently establish a methodological sequence: analytical observation, identification of communicative operations, methodological formulation, practice-based application and reflective analysis. The principal finding is that audiovisual form is not neutral with respect to knowledge: the way experience is mediated conditions what can become perceptible and, consequently, what can become knowable. PEFA therefore shifts film analysis from asking primarily what a film communicates to examining what its communicative forms enable us to perceive, experience and know. The paper concludes that the proposed analytical model offers a transferable methodological principle for communicology, film and media studies, and practice-based audiovisual research, providing a structured procedure for examining experimental film not only as an object of interpretation but as a potential method of knowledge production.

Keywords: Audiovisual Communication; Communicative Operations; Practice-Based Research; Embodied Knowledge; Inner and Outer Exile