

Film as an emotional artifact.
Aalto University
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PSYCHOLOGY OF INTEREST

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Film, Interest and Enjoyment

↳ Why do we watch films?

- ∞ The media use: Entertain, Inform and Educate.
- ∞ Narrative films address two basic emotional concerns: Curiosity and Sympathy.
- ∞ Interest is the emotion that respond to appeals involving these concerns.
- ∞ Interest in film viewing does have a real action readiness to it: watch eagerly.
- ∞ Promise of rewarding outcomes.



Two Approaches to study Interest

Interest as part of emotional experience, curiosity
and momentary motivation.

INTEREST

Interest as part of personality, individual
differences and people's idiosyncratic hobbies,
goals, and avocations.

INTERESTS

Expressions of interest

Facial Expression

	Study 1		Study 2		
	Condition	Interest	Condition	Time	Interest
Eye blinks	S	S	S		
Eyes closed	S	S			S
Glances away (no.)	S	S		S	S
Glances away (time)	S			S	S
Eyelid widening	S		S	S	
Eyeball surface area	nm	nm	S	S	
Lips parting				S	S
Jaw drop					
Yawns				S	S
Smiles		S			
Lip wipes					
Head turning	S	S	S		S
Head tilt					S
Shoulder tilt					
Head stillness	S	S		S	
Skin conductance				S	
Heart rate					



Reeve, J. (1993). The face of interest. *Motivation and Emotion*, 17(4), 353-375.

Expressions of interest

Vocal Expression

⌘ Three dimensions of vocal expressions:

- ⌘ Measures of **time**: Durations of sounds and the overall speech rate.
- ⌘ Measures of **intensity**: Energy in the speech signal that affects the perceived loudness of speech.
- ⌘ Measures of **frequency**: Pitch of the voice, quantified as the rate at which the vocal folds open and close



⌘ Johnstone and Scherer (2000):

- ⌘ **bored speech**: “generally slow and monotonous”.
- ⌘ **Interested speech**: quicker rate of speech and a wider range of frequency.

⌘ Banse & Scherer (1996): professional actors portrayed 14 emotions by communicating sentences.

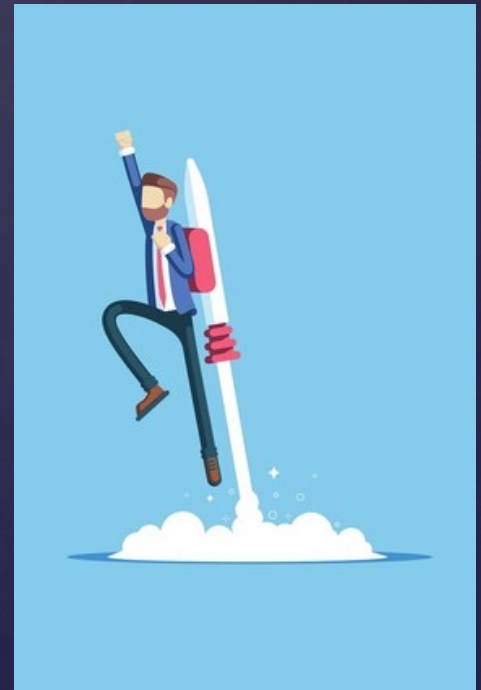
- ⌘ Analysis of the errors found that **confusions of emotions were systematic** rather than random

Subjective Experience

- ⌘ The subjective experience of interest should coincide with other emotional features.
- ⌘ Izard (1977) Interest is:
 - ⌘ The feeling of being engaged, caught-up, fascinated, curious.
 - ⌘ The feeling of wanting to investigate, become involved, or extend or expand the self.
- ⌘ Interest has a positive and active experiential quality.
- ⌘ Past experiences of interest were characterized by elevated feelings of pleasantness, self-assurance, impulsiveness, and tension.
- ⌘ Interest was most closely related to the emotions of enjoyment and surprise.

Functions of Interest

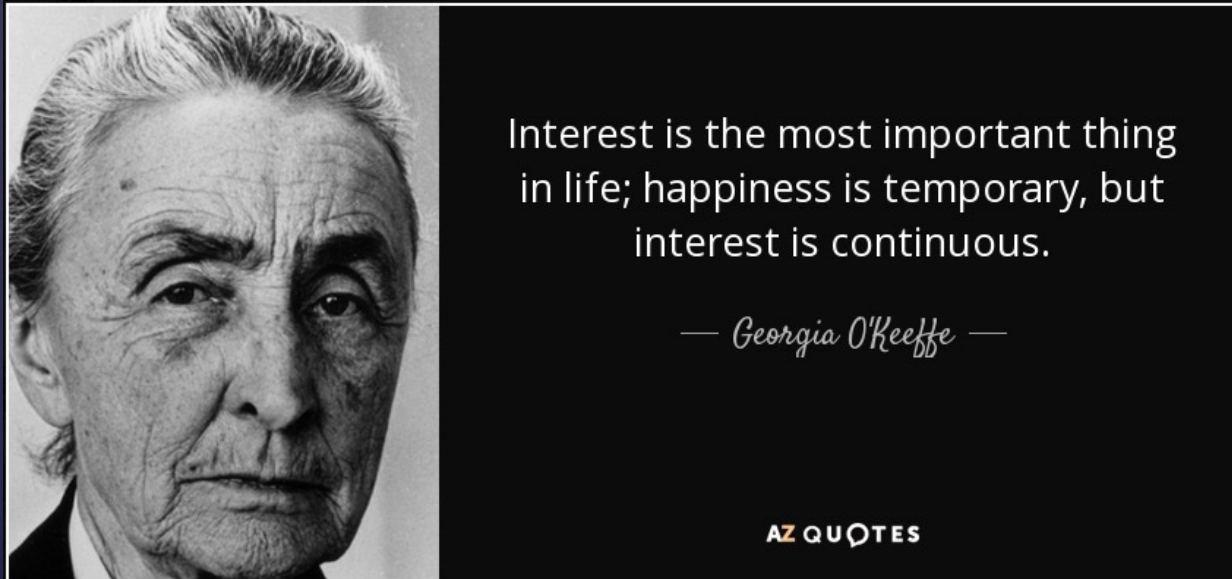
- ⌘ Izard and Ackerman (2000): “Interest motivates **exploration and learning**, and guarantees the person's **engagement** in the environment. Survival and adaptation require such engagement”.
- ⌘ Interest as a **motivational resource**.
- ⌘ Interest as a **facilitator** of diverse experience



Distinguishing Interest from Happiness

Four types of evidence demonstrate differences in the antecedents and consequences of interest and happiness:

- ↳ **Effects** of Interest and Enjoyment Viewing Sets
- ↳ **Behavioral Measures** Related to Interest and Happiness
- ↳ Dimensions Underlying **Aesthetic judgments**
- ↳ **Functions** of Interest and Happiness.



What is interesting?

Theories of Interest

Berlyne's **theory of curiosity**.

- ∞ Correlation of the **4 variables**.
- ∞ Complexity, Novelty, Uncertainty and Conflict.
- ∞ **Arousal 1**: Arousal Potential and optimal arousal levels.
- ∞ **Arousal 2**: Antagonistic reward and aversion systems.



What is interesting?

Theories of Interest

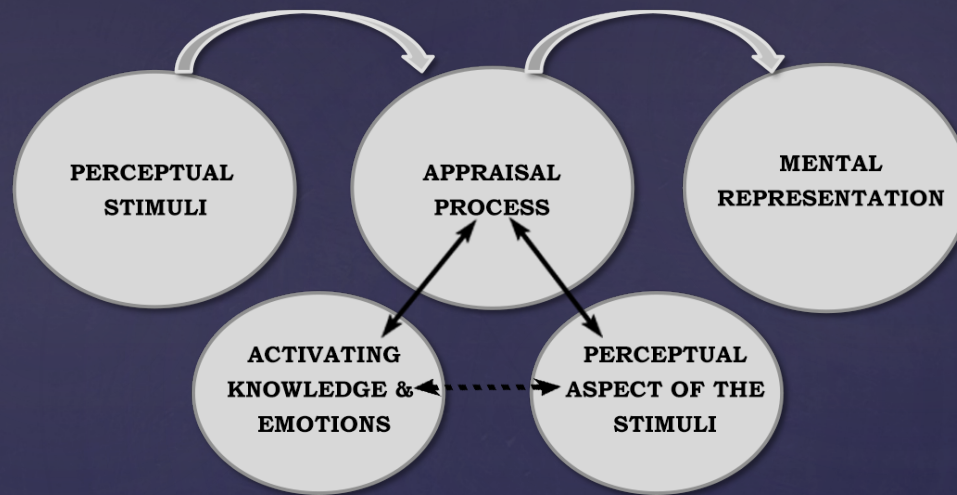
- ∅ Interest and **Affect Gradients** (Silvan Tomkins, 1984)
- ∅ Interest as a **Boredom Drive** (Fowler, 1965)
- ∅ Interest and **information conflict** (Nunnally, 1981)
- ∅ Interest and **Information Gaps** (Loewenstein, 1994)
- ∅ **Multidimensional sources** of Interest (Chen, 1999)



What is interesting?

Theories of Interest

Appraisal theory of Interest (Paul Silvia)



Appraisal process of interest requires two dimensions:

- ∞ First appraisal is **coping potential**: whether the ambiguous event can be understood and the required effort.
- ∞ Second appraisal is the **expected return**:

Interest and Learning

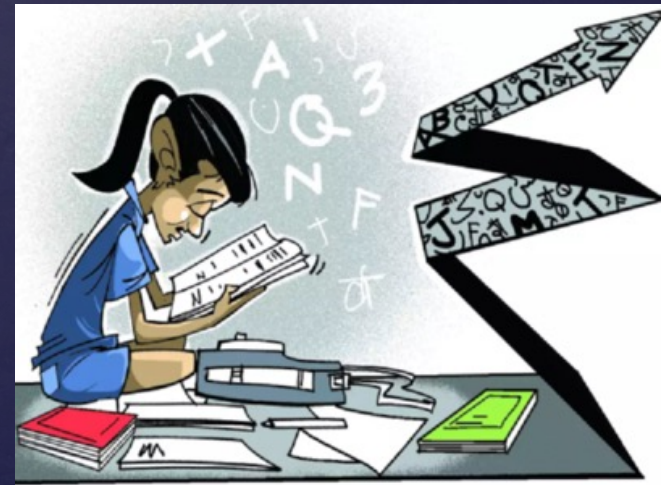
Interest and learning from text.

- ⌘ **Attention** and interest (Anderson, 1982).
- ⌘ **Level of processing** and Interest. (Dijk and Kintsch 1983)
 - ⌘ Verbatim level, propositional level and situational level.
- ⌘ **Learning strategies** and Interest. (Köller, Baumert, & Schnabel, 2001)

Seductive details: When are texts too interesting. (Wade, 1992)

What makes a text Interesting?

- ⌘ Coherence.
- ⌘ Easy comprehension.
- ⌘ Prior Knowledge.
- ⌘ Concreteness.
- ⌘ Vividness and surprisingness.
- ⌘ An appraisal perspective on text-based Interest.



Interest, Personality and Individual Differences

Kluckhohn and Murray (1948)

“In some ways a person is like all other people, in other ways like many other people, and in still other ways like no other people.”

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