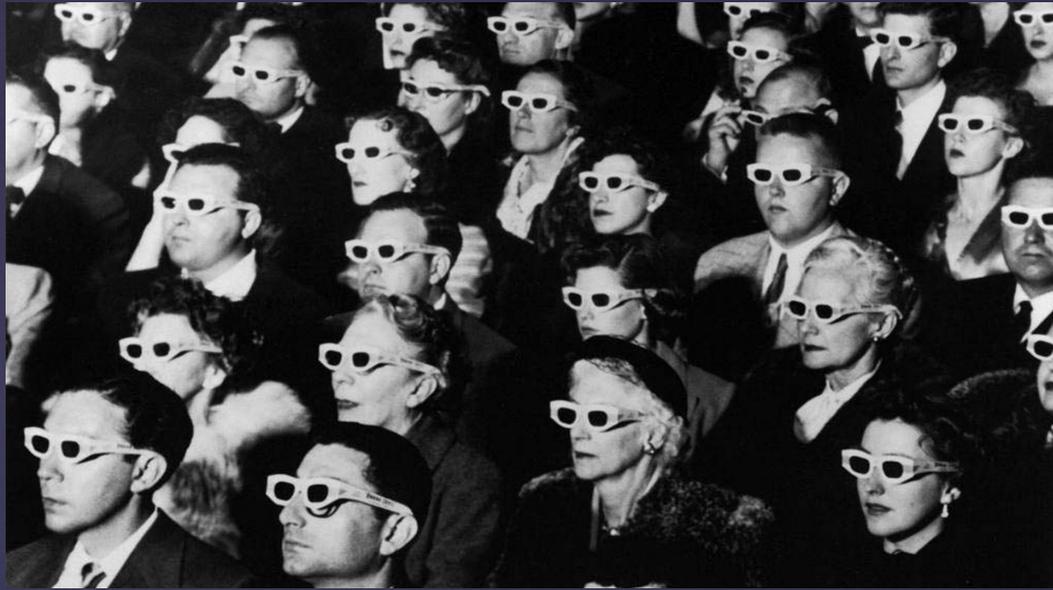


Film as an emotional artifact.
Aalto University
UWAS



Film Structure and Emotion

Jose Cañas-Bajo, PhD
jose.canasbajo@aalto.fi
University of Wide Arts

The Structure of Interest

Definition: By interest we mean the inclination to call on resources from a limited capacity, and to employ them for the elaboration of a stimulus under the influence of the promises which are inherent in the present situation with respect to expected situation.

- ∞ Interest as attention.
- ∞ Behavioral consequences.
- ∞ The experience of interest.
 - ∞ Involvement as flow.
 - ∞ Double Appraisal process



Principle 1

Interest is Determined by Prospect of Return.

The appreciation of a film after it has been completely processed must be distinguished from momentary interest

Principle 2

Temporal Dynamics and Real-time Nature of Interest.

There is a positive relation between interest at any given moment and the anticipated increase in the future Net Return expected at that moment.

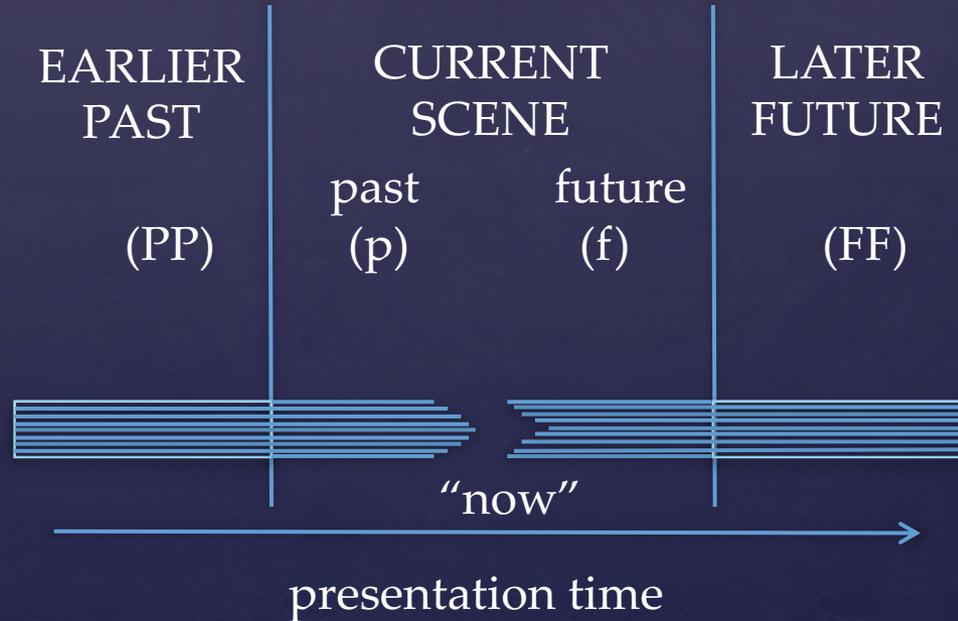
Principle 3

Priority for Direct Prospects of Return.

Interest at any given moment throughout the film presentation time is:

(A) Positively related to the prospect of the greatest possible background net return and

(B) Higher, the more favorably the greatest possible foreground net return of the present action sequence compares with the foreground net return already gained, the foreground return always weighing more heavily than the background return.



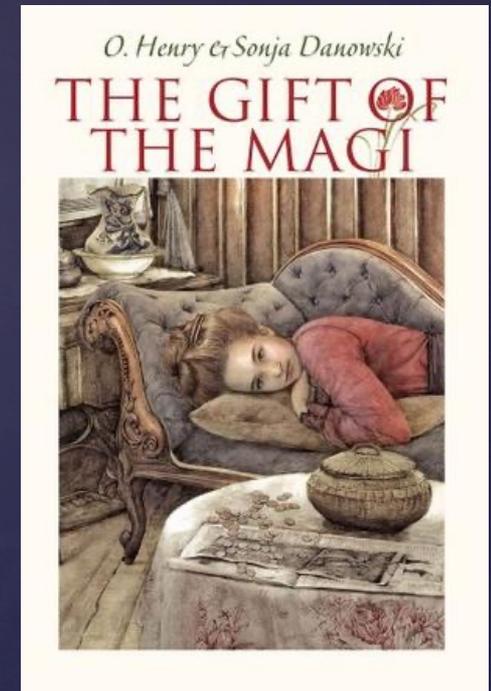
Principle 4

Interest as a Self-enhancing Process.

The action tendency inherent in interest raises the investment and this increase, in turn, has a positive effect on interest by increasing the contrast between NR already gained and the maximum future return that can be expected.

Thematic Structures and Interest

- ⌘ Two determinants of Interest: **Themes and characters.**
- ⌘ The intrinsic Interest **value of Themes.**
- ⌘ Themes and the **Paradoxical Complication.**
 - ⌘ The prospect of Complications, followed by a Solution.
 - ⌘ Themes and Concerns.
- ⌘ The Operation of Themes As Cognitive Structures.
 - ⌘ General Characteristics.
 - ⌘ Cognitive Models of Thematic Structure.
 - ⌘ Thematic organized Packages (**TOPs**)
 - ⌘ Thematic Abstraction Units(**TAUs**)
 - ⌘ Points and Plot Units.



The gift of the magi

Example

1. A young couple wants to buy each other Christmast presents.
2. They are both very poor.
3. Della has long beautiful hair.
4. Jim has a prized pocket watch.
5. To get the money for their presents, Della sells her hair and Jim sells his pocket watch.
6. She buys him a gold chain for his watch.
7. He buys her an expensive ornament for her hair.
8. When they out what they have done, they are consoled by the love behind each other's sacrifices.

The gift of the magi

Example

DELLA

1. Wants to give gift
2. Wants gift
3. wants money
4. Sells hair
5. Get money
6. Gets chain
7. Gives chain
8. Gets ornaments
9. Regrets chain
10. Appreciation

JIM

1. Wants to give gift
2. Wants gift
3. wants money
4. Sells watch
5. Get money
6. Gets ornament
7. Gives ornament
8. Gets chain
9. Regrets ornament
10. Appreciation

Assignment

- ⌘ Build a **graphic for the interest flow** (with your ratings) through the sequences of the movie.
- ⌘ **Identify the Fictional and Artefact elements** (from the previous task) contained in the sequences with highest ratings, lowest ratings and most varied ratings (among the group).
- ⌘ Reflect about the **structure of Interest** through the movie.
 - ⌘ Can the sequences be understood and rated the same way if they are isolated from the rest of the film?
 - ⌘ Are the highest rated sequences plot points?
 - ⌘ Repetitions of fictional and emotional elements.
 - ⌘ What types of elements (fictional or emotional) rise more interest?
 - ⌘ ...

Example

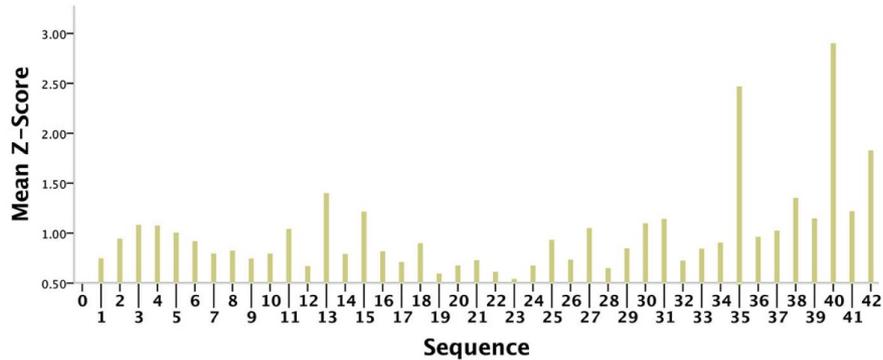


Figure 1. Mean Z-scores for each sequence of Ispansi! (Maestranza Films / Saga Productions / Un Franco 14 Pesetas).

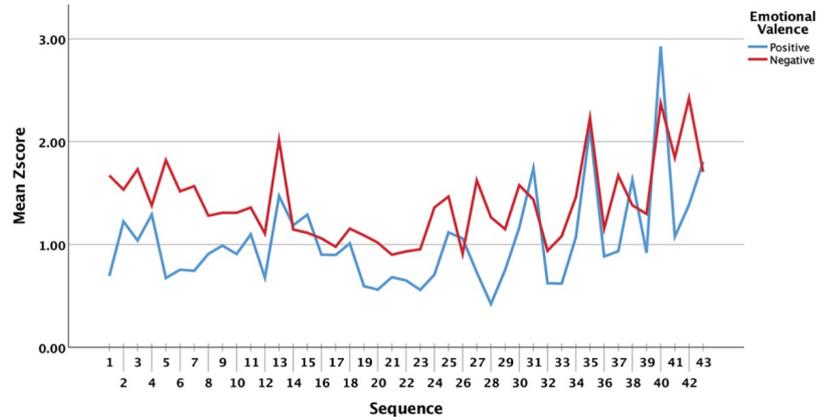


Figure 4. Distribution of positive and negative responses for Ispansi! (Maestranza Films / Saga Productions / Un Franco 14 Pesetas).



References

- ⌘ Potter, W. J. (1988). Perceived reality in television effects research. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 32(1), 23-41.
- ⌘ Tan, E. S. (2013). *Emotion and the structure of narrative film: Film as an emotion machine*. Routledge.
- ⌘ Frijda, N. H. (1993). Moods, emotion episodes, and emotions.
- ⌘ Kivy, P. (1989). *Sound sentiment: An essay on the musical emotions, including the complete text of the corded shell*. Temple University Press.
- ⌘ Levinson, J. (2011). *Music, art, and metaphysics*. Oxford University Press.
- ⌘ Maus, Fred Everett. 1997. "Music as Drama." In *Music and Meaning*. Ed. Jenefer Robinson. 105-30. Ithaca [NY]: Cornell University Press.
- ⌘ Juslin, P. N., & Vastfjall, D. (2008). Emotional responses to music: The need to consider underlying mechanisms. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, 31(5), 559.