

EFFECTS OF HUNGER UPON CARDIAC DECELERATORY RESPONSE TO FOOD PICTURES

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Abstract

When people observe a series of different pictures, the greater the interest-value of a picture, the greater the attendant cardiac deceleration. It was therefore reasoned that when the same picture (or one of equal interest-value) is observed on two occasions, once when the observer is highly motivated to find the picture interesting and once when he is not, greater deceleration should occur when interest in the picture has been heightened.

Forty male undergraduate Ss observed 2 series of chromatic slides, matched for interest value. Each series included 12 appetizing pictures of food and 12 nonfood pictures. Ss observed one series when hungry, the other when satiated, while heart rate (HR) was recorded, then rated the interest-value and pleasantness of the slides in that series.

The greater the pre-experimental interest-value of a picture, the more deceleration it produced ($p < .025$). Moreover, hungry Ss' ratings indicated that they perceived the food slides, taken separately or in contrast to nonfood slides, as far more interesting and pleasant than satiated Ss ($p < .001$). Nevertheless no corresponding differences in HR even approached significance.

Results are related to writings of Berlyne, the Laceys, and Elliott.

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