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“Kneweth One Who Makes these Notes...”: Personality, Individual Differences, and Liking
of Nouveau Roman and Existentialist Literature and Film

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Abstract

Previous studies suggest that personality and individual difference traits are associated with aesthetic preferences, but have infrequently examined associations within specific genres or across media domains. We examined associations between the Big Five personality traits with preferences (i.e., liking) for two non-conventional genres of film and literature, namely nouveau roman and existentialism, in samples of 548 non-experts and 95 genre experts from Austria. Path analyses indicated that Openness to Experience (positively) and Conscientiousness (negatively) were significantly associated with greater liking of stimuli across genres and media domains, after considering the effects of additional, relevant variables (aesthetic expertise and behaviours, social status, and the motive for sensory pleasure). Path models were stable across non-experts and experts, although the strength of the relationships between Openness and liking was stronger for nouveau roman stimuli. Additional analyses indicated that experts had significantly greater liking for stimuli across both genres than non-experts. These results may have implications for the promotion of non-conventional artworks to wider audiences.

Keywords: Aesthetic preferences; Openness to Experience; Psychological aesthetics; Nouveau roman; Existentialism

Introduction

But the world is neither meaningful nor absurd. It quite simply is. And that, in any case, is what is most remarkable about it (Robbe-Grillet, 1965, p. 56).

Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only insofar as he realises himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is (Sartre, 1946/1973, p. 56).

More than a century ago, Fechner (1876) constructed rectangular figures that varied in height-to-width ratios and asked participants to indicate which they liked the most. This “method of choice” of Fechner’s is sometimes seen as the root of attempts to empirically examine aesthetic preferences – or liking – at the level of the individual (for discussions, see Swami & Furnham, 2014, 2019). Indeed, it is now widely acknowledged that aesthetic preferences are shaped not only by stimulus and situational aspects, but also by individual differences (Jacobsen, 2006, 2010; Jacobsen & Höfel, 2002; Leder, Belke, Oeberst, & Augustin, 2004). However, there are still gaps in our understanding of the ways in which individual difference traits shape aesthetic preferences, particularly for lesser-known aesthetic genres. Further, little work has examined the stability of aesthetic preferences across different groups and media domains.

To address these issues, the current study examined associations between individual differences and liking for two hitherto neglected genres in the literature on psychological aesthetics, namely the nouveau roman and existentialist genres. Moreover, we examined the stability of these associations as a function of expertise and media domains (i.e., film and novels). In doing so, we aimed to answer the question: what role do individual difference traits play in shaping liking for specific aesthetic genres?

Individual Differences and Aesthetics

A useful starting point for understanding the impact of individual difference traits on aesthetic preferences is Eysenck's (1940) work, in which participants were presented with visual stimuli and asked to rank these according to their preferences (for reviews, see Myszkowski, Storme, & Zenasni, 2016; Swami & Furnham, 2019). Based on factor-analytic results, Eysenck (1940, 1941a) proposed two traits related to aesthetic preferences, the T factor (the extent to which participants were able to identify aesthetic quality) and the K factor (a bipolar trait that distinguished between preferences for complex versus simple art forms). Eysenck would go on to demonstrate that the K factor was associated with important individual differences, particularly Introversion (1941b, 1988, 1992) and Psychoticism (Eysenck & Furnham, 1993).

Eysenck's work on the K factor precipitated later research focused on individual differences and preferences for visual art forms (e.g., Barron, 1953; Child, 1965), but it was the emergence of the Big Five taxonomy that helped to consolidate this body of work (Swami & Furnham, 2019). The Big Five is a robust framework of traits that provides for an understanding of personality at the broadest level of abstraction (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five framework is a descriptive, hierarchical model, consisting of five bipolar traits, namely Agreeableness (a tendency to be helpful, cooperative and sympathetic toward others), Conscientiousness (a tendency to be disciplined, organized and achievement oriented), Neuroticism (a tendency to lack emotional stability and impulse control; alternatively labelled Negative Emotionality or Emotional Stability), Extraversion (a tendency to be sociable and assertive), and Openness to Experience (a tendency to be intellectually curious and show a preference for novelty and variety; alternatively labelled Open-Mindedness, Intellect, or Imagination).

The Big Five traits have been shown to have strong predictive validity in relation to a wide variety of aesthetic experiences (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007). The most robust finding

from this literature is the association between Openness to Experience and a proclivity toward aesthetic experiences in general (for reviews, see Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, & Reimers, 2007; Swami & Furnham, 2014, 2019), aesthetic attitudes and judgments (e.g., Afhami & Mohammadi-Zarghan, 2018; McManus & Furnham, 2006), and aesthetic emotions (e.g., Fayn, McCann, Tiliopoulos, & Silvia, 2015). In addition, Openness to Experience is consistently associated with greater liking of non-conventional, complex, and artistic forms of visual art (e.g., Chamorro-Premuzic, Reimers, Hsu, & Ahemtoglu, 2009; Chamorro-Premuzic, Burke, Hsu, & Swami, 2010; Furnham & Rao, 2002; Segalin, Cheng, & Cristani, 2017), architecture (Cleridou & Furnham, 2014; Cook & Furnham, 2012), music (e.g., Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, 2009; Vella & Mills, 2017; but see Schäfer & Melhorn, 2017), films (Chamorro-Premuzic, Kallias, & Hsu, 2014), and reading genres (Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2005).

Most of these studies have examined preferences across aesthetic genres, but similar associations have been reported within genres, including liking of Piet Mondrian's abstract paintings (Furnham & Rao, 2002; Swami & Furnham, 2012), Damien Hirst's death-related art (Mohammadi-Zarghan & Afhami, 2019), contemporary heavy metal (Swami et al., 2013), surrealist visual art (Furnham & Avison, 1997), surrealist film (Swami, Stieger, Pietschnig, & Voracek, 2010), and surrealist literature (Swami, Pietschnig, Stieger, Nader, & Voracek, 2012). Findings such as these bolster the claim that Openness to Experience is a central component of the "artistic personality" (McCrae & Costa, 1997). As Chamorro-Premuzic and colleagues (2009, p. 503) concluded, open individuals have qualities that "are harmonious with the notions of abstract art as being more modern, untraditional, and depicting subject matter through intrinsic qualities, rather than literal representational forms". That is, the trait of Openness to Experience includes facets associated with variety-seeking, intellectual curiosity, diversity, non-conventionalism, and imagination (Christensen, Cotter, & Silvia, 2019), and these traits in turn are thought to shape a liking for, and appreciation of, more

complex, contemporary, and challenging aesthetic genres (Conner & Silvia, 2015; Swami & Furnham, 2014).

In contrast, associations between other Big Five traits and aesthetic preferences have tended to be weaker and equivocal, although the trait of Conscientiousness stands out. For example, Conscientiousness has been found to be significantly and negatively associated with a liking for abstract art in some studies (e.g., Furnham & Rao, 2002), although other studies suggest no such associations (Swami & Furnham, 2012). In addition, individuals higher in Conscientiousness also tend to prefer conventional, fact-oriented media (e.g., news and science books; Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Zilca, 2011; Schutte & Malouf, 2004) and tend to dislike non-conventional media (e.g., punk music, literary novels, and cult films; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2005; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Associations between other personality traits and aesthetic liking have tended to be weak at best and, in most cases, null (for a review, see Swami & Furnham, 2014), although Neuroticism and Extraversion may mediate associations between artistic engagement and psychological well-being (Węziak-Białowoska, Białowolski, & Sacco, 2019).

Although the aforementioned literature would appear conclusive, particularly in relation to Openness to Experience, there are a number of complicating issues. For example, Openness to Experience is moderately correlated, and shares lower-order facets, with the trait of sensation seeking (i.e., a desire to seek out varied, complex, novel, and intense experiences, and the willingness to take risks for the sake of such experiences; Zuckerman, 1979) and the motive for sensory pleasure (a disposition to enjoy and pursue pleasant sensory experiences in nature and their representations; Eisenberger et al., 2010). As such, it is not entirely clear whether the findings reviewed above are reflective of a true association with Openness to Experience, or whether they reflect lower-order associations with facets that are common to Openness to Experience, sensation seeking, and the motive for sensory pleasure. The available evidence suggests that both sensation seeking (e.g., Furnham & Avison, 1997;

Swami et al., 2010, 2012; Zuckerman, 2006) and the motive for sensory pleasure (Eisenberger et al., 2010) are independently associated with a preference for non-conventional aesthetic forms and detailed natural scenes, respectively, but that the strength of associations may be weaker than those with Openness to Experience when the traits are measured concurrently (e.g., Furnham & Walker, 2001; Rawlings, Twomey, Burns, & Morris, 1998; Swami & Furnham, 2012).

In addition, most previous studies have not fully accounted for the effects of aesthetic expertise or training. This is important because research indicates that aesthetic expertise shifts preferences toward more complex and unconventional aesthetic forms (see Silvia, 2006). For example, studies comparing the aesthetic preferences of non-experts and experts (e.g., art experts, students of art) have found that the latter show stronger preferences for unconventional, abstract visual art (e.g., Hekkert & van Wieringen, 1996; Pietras & Czernecka, 2018), complex music (Crozier, 1974), and curvilinear architectural spaces (Vartanian et al., 2019). In addition, when presented with the same stimuli (e.g., paintings and films), people who have been trained in the arts are more likely than non-experts to perceive the stimuli as complex, varied, and interesting (e.g., Locher, Smith, & Smith, 2001; Silvia & Berg, 2011). This is also analogous with evidence suggesting that higher social status and educational attainment lead to a preference for more complex art and literature (e.g., Bragg & Crozier, 1974; Francès, 1976). This makes it vital to examine the concurrent effects of expertise, social status, and Openness to Experiences in studies of aesthetic preferences.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that very few studies have examined associations between individual difference variables and aesthetic liking across media domains. Although there are exceptions (see Cleridou & Furnham, 2014; Rentfrow et al., 2011; Xu & Peterson, 2017), these studies have tended to examine preferences for a range of genres across media domains. Rentfrow and colleagues' Entertainment Preference Measure, for example, asks participants to indicate their preference for a total of 108 genres across four media domains

(books/magazines, film, television, and music). Although parsimonious (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), emerging evidence suggests that such broad-stroke categorisations may not be a reliable method of understanding aesthetic preferences (Schäfer & Melhorn, 2017). One alternative way of approaching this issue is to examine preferences for the same genre (i.e., targets that are defined by the same artistic content) across media domains. Doing so may be a useful way of determining the extent to which individual difference traits are reliably associated with aesthetic preferences.

The Present Research

To address the issues discussed above, the present study sought to examine associations between individual differences and aesthetic liking across media domains (i.e., film and novels) and as a function of expertise (i.e., experts and non-experts). We did so for two hitherto neglected genres in research on aesthetic preferences, namely the *nouveau roman* (“new novel”) and existentialist genres. The former refers to (originally French) avant-garde forms of the novel and film that eschew traditional narrative conventions, ignoring elements such as plot, dialogue, and linear narrative, describing and showing objects, rather than subjects, and providing depersonalised fictional worlds (Britton, 1992; for detailed background and comparative analyses, see Babcock, 1997; Coenen-Mennemeier, 1996; Jefferson, 1980; Oppenheim, 1986; Ostrowska, 2008; Zants, 1968). Existentialist art is more difficult to conceptualise, but generally is characterised by protagonists who exist in chaotic, absurd, and seemingly meaningless environments and who are forced to confront the nature and purpose of their existence (Coplestone, 2009). As such, both of these genres can be considered to be *par excellence* examples of non-conventional aesthetic forms.

An additional point of worth considering is that, while existentialism established a stronghold in France during the 1930s and 1940s, the *nouveau roman* movement – which emerged in France in the 1950s – was explicitly proclaimed as a counterpoint to existentialism; that is, it has its origins in anti-existentialist criticism and response (see the two

above epigraphs by Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jean-Paul Sartre, the central figures of French nouveau roman and existentialism, respectively). Given this particular background, the present research not only utilises two 20th-century genres that both are non-conventional, but also considers two genres that been specifically selected to be diametrically opposed in their conceptions, interpretation, and proclamations of the world. Here, we were interested in investigating whether predictors of liking of these two non-conventional genres were comparable to the predictors of other, more conventional, genres; whether predictors differed for these opposing, non-conventional genres; whether they differed for liking of film and literature for these two genres, and; whether they differed between non-experts and experts.

To elaborate, the present study had a number of inter-related aims. First, in primary analyses, we examined associations between the Big Five personality traits (at the highest level of abstraction) and liking for nouveau roman and existentialist literature and films. In this primary analysis, we also examined the influence of the motive for sensory pleasure, social status, and aesthetic expertise and behaviours on preferences. Our primary hypotheses were that the Big Five traits of Openness to Experience (positively) and Conscientiousness (negatively) would be significantly associated with liking across media domains, once the effects of the motive for sensory pleasure, social status, and aesthetic expertise and behaviours had been accounted for. In addition, we also examined the stability of these predictions across two groups, namely non-experts and experts, with the expectation that liking would be higher in the expert group.

In secondary analyses, we also examined associations between additional individual difference traits and liking for specific genres (i.e., nouveau roman or existentialist, respectively). For nouveau roman literature and films, we additionally examined associations between liking and lower-order facets of Openness to Experience, sensation seeking, and transliminality (a dispositional susceptibility to large volumes of imagery, ideation). With regards to transliminality, we were interested in ascertaining whether a higher dispositional

susceptibility to mental imagery and absorption might benefit liking of works of art, which lack a clear, objective interpretation. For existentialist literature and films, we additionally examined the associations between preferences and lower-order facets of Neuroticism and Extraversion, loneliness, and locus of control. Finding meaning in an absurd world, personal freedom, and the accompanying responsibility for one's choices are dominant themes of existentialist thought. Connected to these are concepts of existentialist angst (in relation to the overwhelming experience of freedom and responsibility) and despair/existential crisis (in relation to the cessation of being able to find meaning, purpose or value in life). We were interested in finding out whether variables, which capture aspects of these concepts and themes, might additionally account for variance of liking of existentialist art. We acknowledge that these latter aspects of our analyses were more exploratory, but report on all analyses for completeness.

Method

Participants and Procedure

This study used data from four samples, non-experts vs. experts in the genres of nouveau roman vs. existentialism, respectively (see Table 1 for descriptive sample information). Samples were recruited in two waves. The first wave assessed liking for nouveau roman literature and films, whereas the second, temporally separated, wave assessed liking for existentialist literature and films. Non-experts were approached through word-of-mouth and personal contacts, and in places of congregate activities (parks, streets, dormitories, and university sites) in Vienna, Austria. Experts were recruited specifically among students of French studies (for the nouveau roman portion of the study; by the third author) and philosophy (for the existentialism portion of the study; by the fourth author), who attended advanced-level seminars specifically devoted to nouveau roman (or existentialism) at the University of Vienna and directly approached and recruited participants.

All participants provided written informed consent prior to testing. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and unremunerated. Data collection was conducted individually and took place in private and quiet environments. All procedures in this study adhered to the ethical standards of the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards, and with institutional guidelines of the School of Psychology, University of Vienna. Study participation did not affect the physical or psychological integrity, the right for privacy, or other personal rights or interests of the participants. Such being the case, according to national laws (Austrian Universities Act 2002), this study was exempt from formal ethical approval.

Film clips were presented on a laptop using headphones, whereas text excerpts were presented on individual sheets of laminated paper. To counterbalance possible sequence effects of stimulus presentation, a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ block design was used. The design varied the modus of the stimulus presentation (film vs. text) and the sequence of the presented films and texts, thereby creating eight sequences of stimulus presentation (see Supplemental Materials 1). The four samples were presented with all eight sequences in approximately equal frequency.

Stimuli

Eight film clips and eight text excerpts each from the genres of nouveau roman and existentialism, respectively, were used as stimuli. Clips and texts were selected by the authors to represent exemplary, prototypical genre pieces. Film clips were selected for well-known scenes (e.g., from film trailers, but not film trailers themselves). Text excerpts were selected for well-known passages (e.g., either from the beginning or the end of the text or passages highlighted as dust-jacket text). For a full list of the utilised clips and excerpts, see Supplemental Materials 1 (full passages are available from the corresponding author). For the nouveau roman film clips, both non-experts and experts were presented with the French originals, which featured English subtitles. For the nouveau roman text excerpts, non-experts

were presented with German translations, whereas experts with the French originals for seven of the eight texts; the eighth text originally was in German. For the existentialist film clips and text excerpts, both non-experts and experts were presented with German versions or translations. Film clips lasted between 39s and 168s. Text excerpts contained on average 156 words ($SD = 23$) for the nouveau roman genre and 140 words ($SD = 35$) for the existentialist genre.

Measures

Measures included ratings of film and text liking, and variables common (primary analyses) and specific (secondary analyses) to the investigation of the two genres. Table 2 provides measures of internal consistency (Cronbach α) of film and text liking, and of the variables common to the investigation of the two genres, in the present samples. Figures for the specific variables are provided in Supplemental Materials 1.

Film and text preferences. Film and text liking were queried using one item (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) immediately after exposure to each film and text stimulus. Further ratings were obtained concerning the eliciting of emotions (negative vs. positive), arousal (calm vs. excited), familiarity (unknown vs. known), complexity (simple vs. complex), and comprehensibility (incomprehensible to me vs. I clearly understand the meaning). These additional rating dimensions are not the focus of the current study and thus not discussed further here. Film and text likings were averaged for each participant across all eight respective stimuli for analyses.

Measures common to the investigation of both genres. Scales used for the investigation of both genres included a short Big Five measure (Mini-International Personality Item Pool [IPIP]; Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006), the Motive for Sensory Pleasure Scale (MSPS; Eisenberger et al., 2010), the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000), and a previously unpublished, pretested scale that queried aesthetic expertise of, and behaviours related to, films and literary works.

The Mini-IPIP contains 20 items, querying Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience with four items rated on 5-point scales (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Mini-IPIP scores have been shown to have adequate convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity, and adequate internal consistencies.

The Motive for Sensory Pleasure scale assesses the preference for pleasant natural stimuli, as well as detailed depictions of nature in texts and paintings, over exciting or intellectually stimulating scenes. It contains 15 items rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Scores on the MSPS have been found to have adequate psychometric properties, including adequate internal consistencies.

The MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status asks participants to rate their socioeconomic status on a 10-point scale (depicted as a ladder; 1 = *lowest status*, 10 = *highest status*). Simple assessments of subjective social status are widely used in epidemiological and psychological research, and have been to have shown adequate temporal stability and construct validity (Adler et al., 2000).

Aesthetic expertise and behaviours were assessed with a 30-item scale (content-wise assembled along the lines of similar, but less detailed and more general, art-expertise scales; e.g., Leder et al., 2012). The scale was pretested in an independent sample of $N = 213$ individuals (see Supplemental Materials 2 for items and pretest results). Items queried expertise via attitudes and actual behaviour (e.g., “I like reading novels” and “Watching movies is a hobby of mine”) on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Two of the items queried the estimated numbers of literary works read, and films watched, during the past 12 months. These count-variables were omitted from the computation of scale scores and Cronbach α .

Measures specific to the investigation of either genre. For the nouveau roman investigative portion of the study, ratings of six Openness to Experience facets (fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values; taken from the German NEO-PI-R; Ostendorf &

Angleitner, 2004), sensation seeking (Brief Sensation Seeking Scale [BSSS]; Hoyle, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch, & Donohew, 2002), and transliminality (Revised Transliminality Scale; Lange, Thalbourne, Houran, & Storm, 2000) were obtained.

Each of the Openness facets was assessed with eight items, scored on 5-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The BSSS assesses the tendency to pursue varied, novel, complex, and intense experiences, and the readiness to take risks in doing so, with eight items on a 5-point scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*). Transliminality is the tendency for psychological material to cross thresholds into or out of consciousness. It was assessed with 17 dichotomously-scored (*true/false*) items.

For the investigation of the existentialist genre, ratings of six Neuroticism facets (anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability to stress) and six Extraversion facets (warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, positive emotion; all taken from the NEO-PI-R), loneliness (Multidimensional Loneliness Scale; Schwab, 1997), and locus of control (IE-4; Kovaleva, 2012) were obtained.

Each of the Neuroticism and Extraversion facets, respectively, were assessed with eight items, scored on 5-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The Multidimensional Loneliness Scale assesses three dimensions of loneliness (social loneliness, emotional loneliness, inability to be alone) with 15, 12, and 10 items, respectively, on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The IE-4 assesses internal and external locus of control, with two items each on a 5-point scale (1 = *does not apply to me at all*, 5 = *applies to me to a very great extent*).

Statistical Analysis

A series of path models was fitted to the data, investigating the associations between the Big Five (predictors) with liking of the nouveau roman and existentialist films and texts (outcomes), controlling for social status, aesthetic expertise and behaviours, and the motive for sensory pleasure. These models were also used to test for differences in the associations of

predictors with outcomes between (a) non-experts and non-experts, (b) film liking and text liking, and (c) the nouveau roman and existentialism genres.

Stage 1 of analysis comprised direct tests of (a) and (b). Two multi-group models were fitted: one to the data of the two nouveau roman samples, and one to the data of the two existentialism samples (i.e., within these models, experts and non-experts were treated as different groups). All predictor paths were constrained to equality between the groups and the two outcomes (i.e., it was initially assumed that the strength of associations did not differ either between groups or between film and text liking; fully constrained models). Guided by overall model fit and modification indices, paths were then iteratively freed across groups and/or outcomes, until acceptable model fit was achieved and the remaining modification indices were small (< 5). We deliberately attempted at arriving at the most parsimonious models; hence, all nonsignificant paths ($p < .05$) were set to 0 as well.

Stage 2 of analysis comprised direct tests of (c). Models in Stage 2 included the significant predictors of the final models of Stage 1. One multi-group model compared the associations among non-experts between the nouveau roman and existentialist genres, and a second model the associations among experts. Again, all paths first were constrained to equality between groups and outcomes (fully constrained models) and subsequently freed, guided by the results of differential associations in Stage 1 of the analysis and the modification indices.

Further multi-group path models explored the associations of genre-specific variables with the film and text liking of nouveau roman and existentialist stimuli. Model building was based on the foregoing analyses and also included the genre-specific variables. All path analyses were performed with Mplus 6.11, using robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR). Differences in model fit between the fully constrained vs. the final models in the two stages of analysis were tested with the Satorra-Bentler (SB) scaled χ^2 difference test.

Results

Table 2 provides *Ms* and *SDs* for film and text liking, and for the variables common to the investigation of the two genres. Intercorrelations among these study variables, and data for the variables specific to the investigation of the nouveau roman and existentialist genres, are provided in Supplemental Materials 1. Experts consistently reported significantly higher film and text likings, and higher aesthetic expertise and behaviours, than non-experts. Also, non-experts and experts significantly differed in some Big Five traits, but not consistently so across genres.

Associations of Personality Traits with Film and Text Liking, and Differences between Non-experts and Experts, and between Film and Text Liking (Stage 1 of Analysis)

Nouveau roman. The fully constrained model had an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(25) = 44.92, p = .008, CFI = .947, TLI = .928, RMSEA = .060 [.030; .088]$. However, setting nonsignificant parameters to 0, which also led to the partial freeing of the paths of two predictors across groups and outcomes (see Table 3 for the standardised path coefficients, and Figure 1 for a graphical representation of the final model), increased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(28) = 31.91, p = .278, CFI = .990, TLI = .987, RMSEA = .025 [.000; .060]$ ($SB-\Delta\chi^2(3) = 9.59, p = .022$). This eliminated all paths of the predictors Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Motive for Sensory Pleasure from the model. Estimating all paths from social status and aesthetic expertise and behaviours to film and text liking freely, which had been set to 0 in the second model, did not increase the model fit significantly, $SB-\Delta\chi^2(4) = 3.84, p = .429$; thus, the coefficients of these paths remained set to 0 in the final model. Of the Big Five, only Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience had significant paths to film and text liking. Higher Conscientiousness was uniformly associated with lower film and text liking, whereas higher Openness was significantly associated with greater liking. Aesthetic expertise and behaviours was positively associated with film and text liking among non-experts, but only with film liking among experts. Higher self-rated social status was

associated with higher film liking among non-experts. Film and text liking were similarly intercorrelated among non-experts and experts. The final model accounted among non-experts (experts) for 25% (24%) and 27% (15%) of the variance in film and text liking, respectively.

Existentialism. The fully constrained model did not adequately fit the data, $\chi^2(25) = 40.46, p = .026, CFI = .809, TLI = .741, RMSEA = .078 [.027; .121]$. Setting nonsignificant coefficients to 0, which also resulted in the partial freeing of the paths of four predictors across groups and outcomes (see Table 3 and Figure 1), led to a well-fitting model, $\chi^2(27) = 22.01, p = .737, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 [.000; .058]$ ($SB-\Delta\chi^2(2) = 11.66, p = .003$). This, again, eliminated all paths of the predictors Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Motive for Sensory Pleasure from the model. Estimating all paths of Conscientiousness, social status, and aesthetic expertise and behaviours to film and text liking freely, which had been set to 0 in the second model, did not increase the model fit significantly, $SB-\Delta\chi^2(5) = 4.32, p = .504$; thus, the coefficients of these paths remained set to 0 in the final model. In contrast, estimating the path of Openness to film liking among experts freely increased the model fit significantly, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 4.59, p = .032$; hence, this path coefficient was estimated freely in the final model. Again, only Conscientiousness and Openness had significant paths to film and text liking. Higher Conscientiousness was associated with lower film and text liking among non-experts, and film (but not text) liking among experts. Higher Openness again was associated with higher film and text liking. However, the strength of association was somewhat diminished, compared to the nouveau roman genre. A higher strength of association, comparable to the nouveau roman genre, was observed only among experts for film liking. Aesthetic expertise and behaviours was positively associated with film and text liking among experts, but only for film liking among non-experts. This time, higher self-rated social status was associated with lower film liking among experts. The strength of the intercorrelation of film and text liking was lower among

non-experts than among experts. The final model accounted among non-experts (experts) for 13% (26%) and 7% (10%) of the variance of film and text liking, respectively.

Differences between the Nouveau Roman and Existentialist Genres (Stage 2 of Analysis)

Non-experts. A fully constrained model, including Conscientiousness, Openness, aesthetic expertise and behaviours, and social status, did not fit the data well, $\chi^2(13) = 50.59$, $p < .001$, CFI = .900, TLI = .861, RMSEA = .103 [.074; .133]. Incorporating between-group differences, as suggested by the foregoing analyses (see Table 3; freeing the equality constraints for the paths of Openness to film and text liking across groups and setting the path coefficients of social status to film liking, and of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking, to 0 for the existentialism group), increased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(11) = 14.05$, $p = .230$, CFI = .992, TLI = .987, RMSEA = .032 [.000; .075] ($SB-\Delta\chi^2(2) = 40.92$, $p < .001$).

This model confirmed the differences that had been observed between the genres of nouveau roman and existentialism in Stage 1 of analysis. The paths of Openness to film and text liking were uniform in strength within genres, but differed in strength across genres (standardized path coefficients; nouveau roman: [films] .29 [$SE = .037$] and [texts] .31 [.039]; existentialism: .12 [.055] and .16 [.069]; forcing these coefficients to equality across genres decreased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = 8.01$, $p = .005$). In contrast, paths of Conscientiousness to film and text liking were uniform both within and across genres in this model (standardised path coefficients ranged from -.13 to -.24). Paths of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to film liking were uniform across genres (nouveau roman: .25 [.031]; existentialism: .31 [.040]). Paths of social status to film liking (.10 [.038]), and of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking (.26 [.034]) appeared to be specific for the nouveau roman genre; setting them to 0 decreased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = 66.79$, $p < .001$.

Experts. A fully constrained model did not fit the data well, $\chi^2(13) = 26.48$, $p = .015$, CFI = .771, TLI = .683, RMSEA = .148 [.063; .228]. Incorporating suggested differences (see Table 3; freeing the equality constraints for the paths of Openness to film and text liking

across groups, setting the path coefficients of social status to film liking, and of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking, to 0 in the nouveau roman group, and setting the path of Conscientiousness to text liking to 0 in the existentialism group) resulted in a significantly better fitting model, $\chi^2(11) = 9.13, p = .610, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 [.000; .131]$ ($SB-\Delta\chi^2(2) = 30.28, p < .001$).

This model, again, confirmed the differences that had been observed in Stage 1 of analysis. The paths of Conscientiousness to film and text liking were similar for nouveau roman (-.16 [.086] and -.17 [.059]), and similar to the path of Conscientiousness to film liking for existentialism (-.14 [.068]). However, the paths of Openness to film and text liking differed in strength between genres (nouveau roman: .23 [.084] and .26 [.095]; existentialism: .12 [.159] and .13 [.170]; note that for existentialism these paths lost their nominal significance, owing to the loss of statistical power in this smaller-sample analysis; consequently, setting the coefficients for existentialism to 0 increased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = 4.76, p = .029$; in contrast, setting also the coefficients for nouveau roman to 0 decreased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = 7.04, p = .008$. The paths of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to film liking were similar across genres (.32 [.082] and .34 [.112]). The paths of social status to film liking (-.32 [.124]), and of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking (.37 [.114]) appeared to be specific for existentialism; setting them to 0 decreased model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = 16.83, p < .001$.

Genre-Specific Analyses

Nouveau roman. Descriptive statistics for the genre-specific variables are provided in Supplemental Materials 1. Experts had significantly higher scores than non-experts in four of the six openness facets. To explore the associations of the genre-specific variables with nouveau roman film and text liking, an extended multi-group model was constructed, comprising all genre-specific variables alongside Conscientiousness and aesthetic expertise

and behaviours (see Table 3 and Figure 1). Social status was omitted, as its contribution to film liking was small and applied to only one of the groups.

A fully constrained model, where the path of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking was set to 0 in the group of experts (see Table 3), fitted acceptably to the data, $\chi^2(30) = 44.86, p = .040, CFI = .962, TLI = .947, RMSEA = .047 [.011; .075]$. However, modification indices suggested freeing some group-specific coefficients. Setting all nonsignificant paths to 0 resulted in a significantly better fitting model, $\chi^2(32) = 30.76, p = .529, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 [.000; .047]$ ($SB-\Delta\chi^2(2) = 11.13, p = .004$). Standardised path coefficients of this model are presented in Supplemental Materials 1. The Openness facets were broadly similarly associated with film and text liking among the non-experts, but the pattern appeared more accentuated among the experts (see intercorrelations in Supplementary Materials 1). Controlling for all other facets, the aesthetics, ideas, and values facets were the most salient predictors of film and text liking in the final model. The fantasy and actions facets were, in the final model, not significantly related to the outcomes. The values facet was not significantly related to text liking among non-experts, whereas the feelings facet was associated with lower liking of films, but only among non-experts. Sensation seeking predicted both higher film and text liking in the final model. Transliminality predicted higher film liking as well, but only among non-experts. The model accounted for comparable proportions of variance in the liking ratings as the foregoing model of the Stage 1 analysis.

Existentialism. As neither global Neuroticism nor Extraversion scores were associated with film and text liking in Stage 1 of analysis, we checked the bivariate associations of all existentialism-specific variables in the two groups with film and text liking before building an extended path model. None of the genre-specific variables were correlated with film and text liking ($ps > .05$), except for excitement seeking with film and text liking among non-experts ($rs = .18$ and $.17$, respectively, $ps \leq .032$) and gregariousness with text liking among experts ($r = .41, p = .008$). This latter association emerged in a small sample (n

= 40) and, re-checking it with a robust method (Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient), yielded a non-significant result ($p = .084$). Thus, the extended multi-group path model included only excitement seeking besides the variables of the final model of Stage 1 of analysis. Path coefficients of this variable to film and text liking were set to 0 among experts, as was the path of Conscientiousness to text liking among experts, and the paths of social status to film liking, and of aesthetic expertise and behaviours to text liking, among non-experts.

The model fitted well to the data, $\chi^2(14) = 8.42$, $p = .866$, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 [.000; .051]. Path coefficients of the common variables were broadly similar to the coefficients of Stage 1 of analysis (omitted for brevity). Among non-experts, excitement seeking had standardised coefficients of .12 and .15 to film and text liking, respectively ($ps \leq .022$). This extended model accounted for 14% (film liking) and 9% (text liking) of outcome variance among non-experts.

Discussion

There now exists a considerable body of research suggesting that personality and individual traits are significantly associated with liking of various forms of aesthetic outputs (for reviews, see Swami & Furnham, 2014, 2019). However, a limitation of most of these studies has been the focus on broad, non-exclusive categories of genres, which may detract from reliability (see Schäfer & Melhorn, 2017). In the present study, we sought to overcome this limitation by focusing on two distinct genres, namely nouveau roman and existentialism, that are both relatively non-conventional and furthermore provide diametrically opposed conceptual views of the world. In addition, we extended earlier studies (e.g., Swami et al., 2010, 2012) by examining whether and how associations generalise across two media domains (i.e., film and novels) and as a function of expertise (i.e., experts and non-experts). Although our results are broadly in line with previous findings, there also is a sufficient

degree of additional nuance that our study introduces, which we elaborate on and discuss below.

The first key finding of the present study is the robust association between the Big Five trait of Openness to Experience and liking of both film and texts across genres. This corroborates previous studies showing that Openness to Experiences is associated with aesthetic experiences in general (for reviews, see Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2007; Swami & Furnham, 2014, 2019), as well as more complex, non-conventional, and aesthetic forms both across (e.g., Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2009, 2010, 2014; Cleridou & Furnham, 2014; Kraaykaamp & Eijck, 2005; Rentfrow et al., 2003) and within genres (e.g., Swami & Furnham, 2012; Swami et al., 2010, 2012). In broad outline, our findings support the assertion that more open individuals are likely to show a stronger liking for, and find greater meaning in, aesthetic forms that transcend literal representation. More specifically, it is likely that more open individuals show a stronger liking for novel and complex stimuli (e.g., Silvia, Henson, & Templin, 2009) and for schema violations, possibly because they find such violations more interesting than schema consistent stimuli (Gocłowska, Baas, Elliot, & de Drew, 2017). Open individuals are also more likely to experience awe (e.g., Nusbaum & Silvia, 2011), particularly for stimuli that are challenging either cognitively or structurally.

However, there was a degree of nuance in the associations between Openness to Experience and liking across the two genres studied here. Specifically, we found the strength of the associations was stronger for nouveau roman films and text than it was for the existentialist genre. This may have to do with known structural properties of these two contrasting genres; that is, existentialist literature and films may be considered less transgressive in that they typically include “traditional” elements, such as a linear narrative, clear plot, and a narrator-assisted interpretation of reality. Conversely, nouveau roman engages with structuralism more ambiguously and, in terms of its deeper descriptive technique, requires that readers/viewers interpret objective reality in a more subjective

manner (Britton, 1992; Carrabino, 1973). These elements of nouveau roman may help explain the stronger associations seen with Openness to Experience compared with the genre of existentialism. Additionally, there is evidence that the novelty and complexity of art are more important for the interest and pleasure in individuals high than those low in Openness (Fayn et al., 2015).

In terms of the other Big Five personality traits, we found that Conscientiousness was reliably associated with liking across genres, although the strength of the associations was weaker than that of Openness to Experience. These findings are consistent with studies suggesting that more conscientious individuals show lower liking for non-conventional aesthetic forms (e.g., Furnham & Rao, 2002; Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2005; Rentfrow et al., 2003, 2011). Furnham and Chamorro-Premuzic (2004) suggested that more conscientious individuals are likely more conservative in their aesthetic preferences (see also Carl, Richards, & Heath, 2019), with a greater liking of forms that are representational and non-challenging. Thus, lower Conscientiousness may result in a narrower and restricted aesthetic focus, including lower liking of challenging aesthetic stimuli (McManus & Furnham, 2006). In terms of the other Big Five personality traits, we found null effects, which is consistent with much of the research on aesthetic liking (Swami & Furnham, 2014, 2019).

In addition to the effects of personality, we also found that higher aesthetic expertise and behaviours was mostly consistently associated with liking of films and texts across genres in experts and non-experts. This is broadly consistent with the finding that greater engagement with aesthetic activities is positively associated with aesthetic appreciation (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2009). The lack of association between aesthetic expertise and behaviours and liking of nouveau roman literature in experts, and of existentialist literature in non-experts, might be due to similar effects of prior engagement, which were unfortunately not adequately covered by our measure of aesthetic expertise and behaviours. Nouveau roman literature foremost is treated in the field of French studies. This is why students of this

discipline were considered by us to be genre experts in the first place. The existentialist text excerpts covered stylistically heterogeneous works from the 19th and 20th centuries, some of which are literary classics. It is possible that some participants had knowledge of (some of) these works from secondary education. Thus, the engagement with specific works of art could have been independent of personal aesthetic expertise and behaviours in these two cases.

Likewise, social status was differentially associated with aesthetic preferences in the present study. Specifically, social status was significantly associated with a stronger liking for nouveau roman films in non-experts, but with a weaker liking for existentialist films in experts. Among the non-experts, persons with higher social status were possibly more acquainted with the older genre-films of nouveau roman than persons of lower status. Furthermore, film clips were presented in the original (French) language, featuring English subtitles. This may have appealed more to persons with higher social status and higher educational attainment in our German-speaking sample. In contrast, the existentialist film clips predominantly featured Hollywood blockbusters. This may have appealed less to higher-status persons with a potential interest in the philosophical implications of plot and narrative. Objective, rather than subjective, criteria of social status (e.g., education, income) could be used in future research to explicate these findings. Objective criteria appeared to be more consistently associated with a preference for more complex media in previous research (e.g., Kuipers, 2006; van Rees & van Eijck, 2003).

Our results also indicated that the associations discussed above were relatively stable across both non-experts and experts. However, it was notable that experts expressed significantly greater liking of both nouveau roman and existentialist stimuli. Indeed, the magnitude of the between-group differences were moderate for nouveau roman stimuli and moderate-to-large for existentialist stimuli. In general, these findings are consistent with reports that experts show a stronger liking for more complex and unconventional aesthetic forms (e.g., Crozier, 1974; Hekkert & van Wieringen, 1996; Vartanian et al., 2019). It is

possible that this is due to the fact that experts, as compared to non-experts, are less influenced by low-level visual features and tend to be more focused on compositional and historical aspects of stimuli (e.g., Cleeremans, Ginsburgh, Klein, & Noury, 2016; Locher, 1996; Silvia, 2013; but see Cotter, Silvia, Bertamini, Palumbo, & Vartanian, 2017). However, caution should be exercised when interpreting the present findings, given that experts also had significantly higher Openness to Experience scores than non-experts.

In the present study, we also conducted exploratory analyses examining associations between additional variables and liking for stimuli in specific genres. In terms of nouveau roman stimuli, our findings indicated that lower-order Openness to Experience facets were significantly associated with aesthetic liking. The lower-order facets of Aesthetics (which measures an individual's sensitivity to, and interest in, art and beauty), Ideas (the tendency to be intellectually curious), and Values (the tendency to re-examine traditional social, religious, and political values) were all significant correlates, which is consistent with some previous research (e.g., Rawlings et al., 1998; Rawlings, Vidal, & Furnham, 2000). Conscientiousness remained a significant correlate of preferences in this analysis and, importantly, sensation seeking was positively associated with liking. This is consistent with research suggesting that sensation seeking is strongly associated with liking of non-conventional stimuli, such as surrealist literature (Swami et al., 2012), over-and-above unique effects of the Big Five traits. Transliminality was a significant correlate of liking of nouveau roman films in experts, although the effect was relatively weak. Conversely, the lower-order Extraversion facet of Excitement Seeking was the only significant correlate of liking of existentialist stimuli and only in non-experts. Excitement Seeking exhibits a trait overlap with sensation seeking. This is further evidence that sensation seeking is of general relevance in relation to the liking of art.

The results of the present work should be considered in light of several limitations. Our two expert samples were carefully selected, if not hand-picked, and thus were inevitably relatively small, which may have led to observing one or the other volatile effect (e.g., the

association between the lower-order Extraversion facet of Gregariousness and liking of existentialist literature in experts). In similar vein, future studies should seek to replicate our findings with more representative samples of adults, as well as with participants from other cultural groups (although it should be noted that our findings likely are cross-culturally stable, given that people from different cultures base aesthetic preferences on common formal features of stimuli; Che, Sun, Gallardo, & Nadal, 2018). Future work could also extend the present findings by considering interactive effects between stimuli and participant factors. For example, there is some evidence that contextualising abstract, but not representational art, through the use of elaborate, content-specific information was associated with the ability to understand the art and stronger aesthetic preferences (Swami, 2013). Future work could also seek to vary stimulus-related factors, such as length, complexity, and – in terms of films – screen size (e.g., de Kort, Meijnders, Sponselee, & IJsselsteijn, 2006) to examine the extent to which such factors mediate aesthetic preferences.

A further point worth highlighting is that the present study was focused on aesthetic liking, which is only part of an individual's repertoire of aesthetic emotions (Fingerhut & Prinz, 2018; Schindler et al., 2017). As such, our study is unlikely to have captured the complexity of aesthetic judgements, which may include related aesthetic emotions (e.g., feelings of awe, fascination, or being moved), and epistemic emotions (e.g., interest), as well as outcomes of aesthetics judgments, such as feeling energised, confused, or bored. Future studies could include a wider array of outcome measures (cf. Schindler et al., 2017), including mixed appraisals (see Barford, Fayn, Silvia, & Smillie, 2018), as well as potential mediating variables (e.g., perceived complexity and familiarity; Francuz, Zaniewski, Augustynowicz, Kopiś, & Jankowski, 2018) to tap some of what was missed in the present work. Finally, some of the utilised measures (e.g., for Conscientiousness) had relatively low values of internal consistency. Although it is known that Cronbach α is affected by scale length and disadvantages short scales (such as those used in the current study), low reliability could have

affected the obtained results. Future studies could use more comprehensive scales to increase reliability and trait coverage.

To conclude, our results suggest that personality and individual differences – particularly the Big Five trait of Openness to Experience – are significantly associated with preferences for nouveau roman and existentialist film and literature among both genre experts and non-experts. This information will be useful to scholars interested in understanding preferences for non-conventional or unusual aesthetic works (e.g., Turner & Silvia, 2006), as well as artists, agencies, and policy-makers seeking to promote unconventional aesthetic productions to funders and the wider public (e.g., Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2012). The way people come to like non-conventional and transgressive artworks depend, in part, on individual difference traits, which makes it important to consider these traits when thinking how best to promote such works to a wider audience.

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Table 1*Sample Characteristics*

	Nouveau Roman		Existentialism	
	Non-experts	Experts	Non-experts	Experts
<i>n</i>	386	55	162	40
Women (%) ^a	194 (51%)	48 (87%)	86 (53%)	17 (43%)
Age range	14–87	19–64	14–78	19–46
<i>Mdn</i> (interquartile range)	29 (23–48)	22 (21–25)	23 (21–25)	24 (21–27)
Education, <i>n</i> (%) ^a				
Lower secondary	27 (7%)	1 (2%)	15 (9%)	1 (3%)
Upper secondary	286 (74%)	43 (78%)	96 (59%)	26 (65%)
Tertiary	71 (18%)	11 (20%)	50 (31%)	12 (30%)
Semester of study ^b				
<i>Mdn</i> (interquartile range)	NA	6 (4–6)	NA	4 (2–9)

Note. ^a Based on the available data. ^b French studies for nouveau roman and philosophy for existentialism. The skewed sex ratio in the nouveau roman expert sample reproduces the skewed sex ratio (> 90% women) among French studies undergraduates at the site of data collection.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Film and Text Liking, and of the Study Variables Common to the Investigation of the Two Genres, Alongside Standardized Mean Differences (Cohen d) Between Non-experts and Experts, and Measures of Internal Consistency (Cronbach α)

Scale or facet	Cronbach α	Nouveau Roman			Existentialism		
		Non-experts	Experts	Cohen d	Non-experts	Experts	Cohen d
Film liking	.82/.82	3.24 (1.18)	4.02 (0.88)	0.68***	4.64 (0.90)	5.07 (0.90)	0.48**
Text liking	.79/.82	3.51 (1.15)	4.27 (0.80)	0.68***	4.34 (0.72)	5.01 (0.81)	0.90***
Agreeableness	.78	2.01 (0.77)	1.72 (0.75)	-0.37*	1.80 (0.73)	1.96 (0.91)	0.22
Conscientiousness	.63	3.58 (0.78)	3.52 (0.85)	-0.08	3.34 (0.89)	3.14 (0.75)	-0.23
Extraversion	.71	3.28 (0.81)	3.77 (0.73)	0.61***	3.43 (0.77)	3.14 (0.87)	-0.37*
Neuroticism	.68	2.72 (0.79)	2.79 (0.92)	0.09	2.81 (0.87)	3.11 (0.78)	0.35*
Openness	.87	3.61 (0.83)	3.83 (0.80)	0.27	4.12 (0.69)	4.58 (0.46)	0.70***
Motive for sensory pleasure	.85	5.66 (0.86)	5.72 (0.75)	0.05	5.57 (0.82)	5.78 (1.00)	0.24
Social status	NA	5.90 (1.70)	6.67 (1.07)	0.47**	6.07 (1.76)	6.29 (1.90)	0.12
Aesthetic expertise and behaviours	.92	4.11 (1.09)	4.71 (0.91)	0.56***	4.39 (1.03)	4.92 (0.97)	0.52**

Note. Cronbach α s of film and text likings are provided separately for the nouveau roman (left) and existentialism (right) genre samples; all other coefficients apply to the merged samples. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ in independent t tests.

Table 3

Standardized Path Coefficients in the Two Multi-Group Path Models of Nouveau Roman and Existentialism Film and Text Liking

Predictor	Nouveau roman				Existentialism			
	Non-experts		Experts		Non-experts		Experts	
	Films	Texts	Films	Texts	Films	Texts	Films	Texts
Conscientiousness	-.13 ^a (.034)	-.14 ^a (.037)	-.19 ^a (.053)	-.21 ^a (.057)	-.18 ^d (.051)	-.22 ^d (.063)	-.15 ^d (.045)	0
Openness	.26 ^b (.035)	.28 ^b (.037)	.33 ^b (.050)	.36 ^b (.055)	.13 ^e (.056)	.16 ^e (.068)	.30 (.112)	.10 ^e (.045)
Social status	.10 (.038)	0	0	0	0	0	-.33 (.107)	0
Aesthetic experiences and behaviours	.29 ^c (.034)	.31 ^c (.037)	.31 ^c (.050)	0	.25 ^f (.062)	0	.23 ^f (.074)	.27 ^f (.078)
Explained variance	25%	27%	24%	15%	13%	7%	26%	10%

Note. Results of the two final multi-group path models (Stage 1 of analysis) for the liking of films and texts of the nouveau roman and existentialism genres, comparing within the two models non-experts and experts. For a graphical representation of these models, refer to Figure 1. Parentheses contain the standard errors of the path coefficients. Superscripts denote which paths were constrained to equality (unstandardised parameters) across groups and/or stimuli; standardised path coefficients may still differ between groups and stimuli, due to differences in dispersion. 0 denotes paths, which were set to zero. The models also contained the predictors Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Motive for Sensory Pleasure;

however, no path coefficient of these predictors did differ significantly from 0; they are thus omitted in the table. Film and text liking were allowed to correlate freely across groups (nouveau roman: $r = .52$ [non-experts] vs. $r = .46$ [experts]; existentialism: $r = .31$ vs. $r = .65$). All $ps \leq .03$.

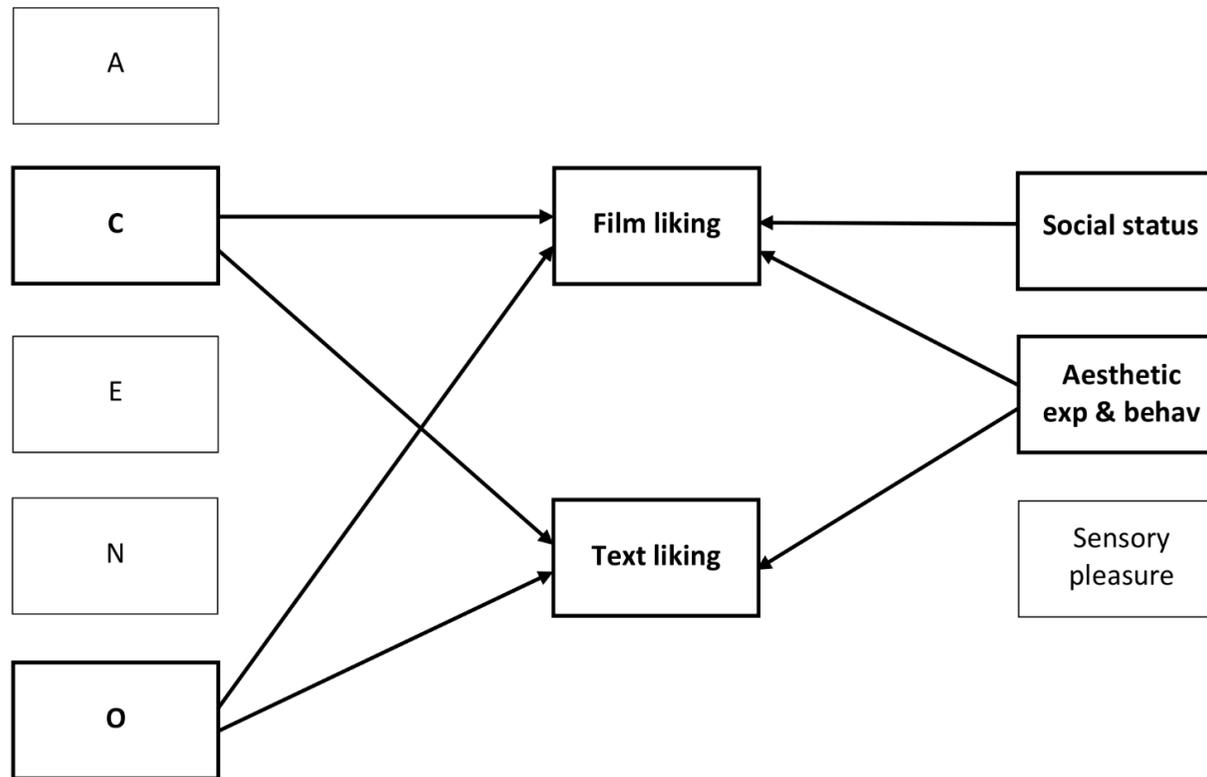


Figure 1

Graphical representation of the final multi-group path models (Stage 1 of analysis) for the liking of films and texts of the nouveau roman and existentialism genres among non-experts and experts. A = Agreeableness, C = Conscientiousness, E = Extraversion, N = neuroticism, O = Openness to Experience, Aesthetic exp & behav = aesthetic expertise and behaviours, sensory pleasure = motive for sensory pleasure. For structural differences between non-experts and experts and the two genres, and for standardised path coefficients, refer to Table 3.