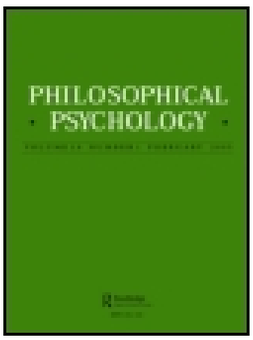

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ARTICLE

An empirical investigation of guilty pleasures

Kris Goffin and Florian Cova

Thumos Research Group, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

ABSTRACT

In everyday language, the expression 'guilty pleasure' refers to instances where one feels bad about enjoying a particular artwork. Thus, one's experience of guilty pleasure seems to involve the feeling that one should not enjoy this particular artwork and, by implication, the belief that there are norms according to which some aesthetic responses are more appropriate than others. One natural assumption would be that these norms are first and foremost aesthetic norms. However, this suggestion runs directly against recent findings in experimental philosophy, according to which most people deny the existence of aesthetic norms. Through three studies, we investigated people's experiences of guilty pleasures and the norms that underlay these experiences. We tentatively conclude that guilty pleasures are more often connected to one's personal norms and social expectations than to properly aesthetic norms.

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Experimental philosophy; aesthetic normativity; emotions; guilty pleasures

1. Guilty pleasures and folk aesthetics

Among friends, conversations about cherished works of art often end up with confessions of guilty pleasures.[1] Though the use of the expression 'guilty pleasure' is not restricted to objects of aesthetic consumption and also extends to other kinds of objects (such as food) and activities (such as certain sexual activities), it bears a privileged relationship to objects of aesthetic consumption. For example, the Urban Dictionary's entry for 'guilty pleasure' offers illustrations such as "keeping a secret collection of ABBA and Carpenters and listening to their albums when no one else is around" or "listening to and secretly loving Taylor Swift" (Urban dictionary, n.d.).[2]

We will use the expression 'guilty pleasure' to refer to cases where one feels bad about enjoying a particular artwork. Thus, the existence of guilty

CONTACT Kris Goffin goffin.kris@gmail.com Thumos Research Group, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

For those curious to directly read participants' answers to open-ended questions (including descriptions of their own guilty pleasures), all materials (including data files) are publicly accessible at osf.io/gvrfh/ One will also find additional analyses, including coding of participants' answers and an exploration of the link between aesthetic objectivism and guilty pleasures.

pleasures shows that our aesthetic experience can sometimes be conflicted: There are cases in which we enjoy a certain object but feel we should not. The conflict can be described as an emotionally ambiguous experience: We enjoy something (a positive affect) but simultaneously feel bad about it (a negative affect). However, what these conflicts reveal is, first and foremost, that we view our enjoyment of aesthetic objects as subject to *norms* which tell us that it is wrong to enjoy something or that we should not enjoy something. This is one of the reasons why certain people disavow the experience (and even the expression) of guilty pleasures. Szalai (2013, December 9, paragraph 12) sees it as "the distillation of all the worst qualities of the middlebrow – the condescension of the highbrow without the expenditure of effort," while Sternbergh (2014) sees it as a "pernicious linguistic remnant of the 20th century," conveying the idea that "certain cultural pleasures are more edifying than others." Ten years before them, Klosterman (2004, November 1) had already condemned the concept of a guilty pleasure on the basis that "the only people who believe in some kind of universal taste – a consensual demarcation between what's artistically good and what's artistically bad – are insecure, uncreative elitists who need to use somebody else's art to validate their own limited worldview. It never matters what you like; what matters is why you like it."

Thus, the fact that we readily and commonly speak about guilty pleasures seems to indicate that, to the dismay of many essayists, we distinguish between right and wrong aesthetic enjoyment and accept the idea that our aesthetic appreciation is subject to norms. This, it turns out, is of the utmost importance for the study and understanding of "folk aesthetics" (i.e. the way non-philosophers commonly think about aesthetics and aesthetic objects). In recent years, experimentally minded philosophers have been investigating the structure and content of folk aesthetics. One topic of interest has been whether ordinary people consider aesthetic judgements and attitudes to be subject to norms. Overall, experimental philosophers have tended to claim that folks, in contrast with many aestheticians, do not think that aesthetic judgements and attitudes can be "correct" or "incorrect." To put it otherwise, they have suggested that "there is no accounting for taste" is the basic principle of folk aesthetics.

Budd (2007) calls this view, according to which aesthetic judgements do not have correctness conditions that go beyond one's mere subjective preferences "aesthetic nihilism." Aesthetic nihilism opposes the claims that aesthetic judgements are by their very nature intersubjectively valid and that, by making an aesthetic judgement, one does not merely express "personal responses to the objects of judgement, but claims meriting the agreement of others" (Budd, 2007, p. 333).[3] It has often been contended that we are naturally drawn to the idea that aesthetic judgements are intersubjectively valid and that aesthetic nihilism goes against common

sense (Carroll, 1999; Réhault, 2013; Zangwill, 2001). However, this is exactly what experimental philosophers have come to deny (Cova, 2018; Cova & Pain, 2012; Cova et al. 2019).

However, the existence of guilty pleasures seems to constitute a vivid counterexample to the claim that ordinary people are aesthetic nihilists. Indeed, when one is experiencing a guilty pleasure, it seems that one does not think that "there is no accounting for taste" because one takes one's own response to be "bad" or "incorrect." This is why, in this paper, we investigate the experience of guilty pleasures as a possible counterexample to the claim made by experimental philosophers that folk aesthetics is founded on aesthetic nihilism. This is not the only question raised by the concept of guilty pleasures.[4] However, we focus in this paper on the nature of the norms involved in the experience of guilty pleasures and what guilty pleasures can teach us about the everyday norms that guide our aesthetic responses.

2. The empirical study of folk aesthetics: Recent developments and criticism

To begin, we must first ask the question: Why think that folk aesthetics is nihilistic? This conclusion might seem surprising, given that philosophers have traditionally described lay people as ascribing *intersubjective validity* (and thus the potential to be "correct" or "incorrect") to aesthetic judgements (e.g. Zangwill, 2005). However, the conclusion is derived from a series of empirical results that challenge this view of common sense.

Goodwin and Darley (2008) ran a series of studies probing folk realism about moral judgements. Somewhat ironically, they used aesthetic judgements as controls for comparison, assuming that aesthetic judgements constituted a good example of "subjective claims." As part of these experiments, participants were thus presented with aesthetic comparisons, such as "Shakespeare was a better writer than Dan Brown," or "Miles Davis was a better musician than Britney Spears." In each case, participants had to say if these judgements were (i) true, (ii) false, or (iii) just "an opinion or an attitude." The results suggested that many participants did not attribute much intersubjective validity to aesthetic judgements, with most of them answering that such comparisons were only a matter of opinion.

A methodological problem with Goodwin and Darley's studies is their use of "opinion or attitude" as an equivalent for "claims about which one cannot be right or wrong," which are arguably not synonymous. More recent studies do not make this mistake. Across three studies, Cova and Pain (2012) probed people's beliefs about the intersubjective validity of aesthetic judgements. In their first two studies, they presented participants with vignettes describing several kinds of disagreements between two

interlocutors coming from different cultures: typical subjective disagreement (e.g. disagreement about whether some food tastes good or bad), typical factual disagreement (e.g. disagreement about whether Proust is the author of *In Search of Lost Time*), and aesthetic disagreement (e.g. whether a given painting, song, or landscape is beautiful or ugly – this included famous works of art such as Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and Beethoven's *Für Elise*). For each kind of disagreement, respondents were asked to indicate which of the four following possibilities best described the situation (Cova & Pain, 2012, p. 245):

(a) One of the interlocutors is right while the other is wrong.
(b) Both are right.
(c) Both are wrong.
(d) Neither is right or wrong. It makes no sense to speak in terms of correctness in this situation. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion.

As it turned out, most respondents chose answer (d) for aesthetic disagreements. In fact, the likelihood of choosing (d) did not significantly differ between subjective and aesthetic disagreements. This suggests that lay people do not view aesthetic judgements as possessing intersubjective validity, which is the possibility of being "correct" or "incorrect" for a larger range of individuals.

Cova and Pain's results are limited by the nature of their sample: Their three studies involved a total of only 80 French students. One might thus doubt whether their results can be generalized.[5] This is why Cova et al. (2019) replicated Cova and Pain's third study at a cross-cultural scale, interrogating over 2,000 participants across 19 countries. Although there were notable cross-cultural variations, they found that answer (a) was the least chosen in every country they studied; rather, depending on the country, participants tended to claim either that "both interlocutors were right" or that "neither was right or wrong."

Put together, these results strongly suggest that lay people do not attribute intersubjective validity to aesthetic judgements and that folk aesthetics is aesthetically nihilistic (in Budd's sense). However, one important criticism can be raised against this conclusion: These studies all appeal to participants' explicit judgements. However, it could be that participants explicitly deny intersubjective validity to aesthetic judgements while implicitly attributing to them such validity. To put it otherwise, questioning participants in the manner of these studies only informs us about the participants' explicit theories, not about the deeply held commitments that actually guide their practices (Réhault, 2013; Zangwill, 2018).

In order to vindicate this line of reasoning, one might show that some of our aesthetic practices can only be explained by an implicit commitment to

the idea that aesthetic judgements have intersubjective validity or, to put it otherwise, to the idea that there are intersubjective norms that apply to aesthetic judgements. As it turns out, on a certain account of this phenomenon, guilty pleasures precisely seem to imply such a commitment. Indeed, the notion of guilty pleasures seems to indicate that, in some cases, we feel that we are wrong to enjoy certain works of art. However, this idea is precisely incompatible with aesthetic nihilism – that is, with the idea that all aesthetic preferences are equal. Thus, the fact that we experience guilty pleasures might show that, even if most people explicitly endorse aesthetic nihilism, they do not implicitly live by it, as their own affective experiences show.

3. Two accounts of guilty pleasures

The existence of guilty pleasures might show that laypeople indeed think that aesthetic attitudes are subject to norms, but does this show that folk aesthetics is not committed to aesthetic nihilism? Not necessarily. To reject this claim, we must first show that the norms at stake in guilty pleasures are aesthetic norms. It might well be the case that, in guilty pleasures, we judge our aesthetic attitudes to be wrong by a standard that has nothing to do with aesthetic considerations. If this is so, the phenomenon of guilty pleasures would not contradict the idea that most people are aesthetic nihilists, for aesthetic nihilists might be open to the idea that non-aesthetic (e.g. prudential, social, or moral) norms apply to aesthetic judgements and attitudes. This is why we can distinguish between two possible accounts of the experience of guilty pleasures.

3.1 The aesthetic account of guilty pleasures

According to the *aesthetic account of guilty pleasures*, a straightforward description of our experience of a guilty pleasure is the following: One feels bad because one should not enjoy a particular work of art, and one should not enjoy this particular work of art because it has no aesthetic value or because it is aesthetically bad. This seems to be a natural explanation: Claims such as "I know it is a horrible movie, but I still enjoy watching it" are archetypal expressions of guilty pleasure and seem to refer to aesthetic values.

Such an account of guilty pleasures has, for example, been defended by Frierson (2014). Frierson argues that guilty pleasures show that there is such a thing as aesthetic normativity (in the Kantian sense): Indeed, the reason for the "guilt" in a guilty pleasure is that we take the "pleasure" in question to rest upon an incorrect judgement of an artwork. Thus, at the core of the experience of guilty pleasure is the idea that we should aim for

"higher" feelings.[6] Frierson argues that the phenomenon of guilty pleasure indicates that philosophers and "folk" intuitively agree with the idea that there are "correct" and "incorrect" responses to art.

Another version of the aesthetic account is to say that guilty pleasures are examples of *aesthetic akrasia*. *Akrasia* is a concept borrowed from the philosophy of action and moral psychology: It means acting against one's better judgement. Some aestheticians have applied this concept to the explanation of "bad" aesthetic judgements (De Sousa, 1997; Herzog, 2000; Silvers, 1972). On this theory, the experience of guilty pleasure might occur when one makes a bad aesthetic judgement although one knows (or has reason to believe) that this judgement is incorrect. However, Thériault (2017) rejects the aesthetic-akrasia-interpretation of guilty pleasure on the grounds that the "badness" of the artwork in question need not necessarily be "aesthetic." For example, some experiences of guilty pleasures might arise from our enjoyment of something which is aesthetically good but morally repulsive, a possibility that we will discuss in more detail in the next section.

Whatever the difference between these two approaches, the basic idea behind the aesthetic account of guilty pleasures can be summarized in the following way. Works of art in general have certain aesthetic properties: They can be beautiful, elegant, original, ugly, and so on. These aesthetic properties provide the grounds for corresponding aesthetic norms: that one should not enjoy an ugly painting or a novel filled with plot-holes but, rather, one should enjoy a deep, intelligent movie. Thus, a guilty pleasure is an experience in which one enjoys a given work of art but is aware (or at least believes) that this enjoyment contravenes one of these aesthetic norms and is thus unwarranted by the object's aesthetic properties. According to this aesthetic account of guilty pleasure, the "should not" that gives rise to the experience of guilty pleasures expresses and embodies an aesthetic norm.

If this account of guilty pleasures is correct, then their existence seems to be incompatible with the claim that lay people are really aesthetic nihilists; guilty pleasures can only occur if one believes that one has aesthetic reasons not to enjoy a given work of art. Of course, one might note that this does not straightforwardly imply that people attribute intersubjective validity to their aesthetic judgements and attitudes. After all, even if the experience of guilty pleasures suggested that people consider their aesthetic judgements and attitudes to be subject to norms, it might still be possible that people consider said aesthetic norms and reasons to be valid only for them (that is, relative, rather than intersubjectively valid). However, this might not be the most likely outcome. Conjoined with other observations, such as the fact that people do debate about aesthetic matters and do distinguish between "good" and "bad" aesthetic taste, such an

account of guilty pleasures would provide solid reasons to doubt the claim that people are aesthetic nihilists.

3.2 The non-aesthetic account of guilty pleasures

However, this is not the only possible account of guilty pleasures. It might be that guilty pleasures arise from norms that are not aesthetic. To explain the distinction between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic accounts, one can draw an analogy with norms that apply to emotions. There are two ways in which emotional reactions can be deemed inappropriate (D'Arms & Jacobson, 2000; Deonna & Teroni, 2012). In the first way, the inappropriateness of an emotional reaction to an object depends on the object's properties: For example, it might be inappropriate to be afraid of a small dog because the dog is not dangerous and feeling fear should depend on the dangerousness of its object. Similarly, it might be inappropriate for us to feel anger at someone who just helped us because anger is supposed to be directed at people or things that prevent us from reaching our goals. In this case, the norms that apply to emotions (i.e. the question "Should I have this emotional response or not?") depend on the properties of their objects.[7] This sort of inappropriateness is very close to the kind we discussed in our first, aesthetic account of guilty pleasures. According to this account, guilty pleasures are aesthetically inappropriate to the extent that one's enjoyment does not fit the aesthetic properties of its object.

There is, however, a second way in which emotion can be said to be inappropriate: when it violates a norm that has nothing to do with the properties of its object but instead with other considerations. For example, if someone tells me a really funny joke at a funeral, my feeling of amusement might be justified by the joke's intrinsic properties (its *funniness*); however, my feeling might be socially unacceptable in the context. Similarly, it might be morally inappropriate to laugh at a racist or sexist joke, even if it is funny, and it might be prudentially inappropriate to get angry at your boss, even if he behaves in an unjust manner.

Thus, emotions can be inappropriate in two ways: either because they are not warranted by their object's properties, or because of some other external standard. The same might be true for our enjoyment of works of art. Our first account of guilty pleasures contended that the norm that is violated in guilty pleasures is an aesthetic norm and that the inappropriateness of our enjoyment depends on the properties of its object. However, it might simply be that, in guilty pleasures, we feel bad because our enjoyment violates a non-aesthetic norm: for example, a prudential, social, or moral norm.

The non-aesthetic account of guilty pleasures is perfectly compatible with the idea that people are aesthetic nihilists. Indeed, one can hold that

there is no proper aesthetic normativity and that aesthetic judgements are just expressions of subjective preferences and consistently believe that enjoying certain works of art might violate prudential, social, or moral norms. For example, I might think that it is immoral to enjoy works of art that objectify women or celebrate shallow lifestyles and thus feel "guilty" about enjoying such works without committing to the idea that it is aesthetically right or wrong to enjoy these works.

Interestingly, the non-aesthetic account of guilty pleasures is also in line with popular characterizations of guilty pleasures. Take, for example, *prudential norms*: It is striking that people do not only use the expression 'guilty pleasures' to talk about objects of aesthetic consumption but also use it to speak about food or substances that can be consumed, such as chocolate, cigarettes, and drugs. What makes these pleasures "guilty" is not that the consumer's enjoyment is disproportionate to the gastronomical merits of the food or the qualities of the drug experience, but the fact that their consumption is detrimental to our health. One example of guilty pleasures given in the Urban Dictionary is "a cigarette every now and then is a guilty pleasure for me" (Urban dictionary, n.d.).[8] A search for 'guilty pleasures' on Google Scholar returns a certain number of psychological studies that are all about (unhealthy) food consumption (see, e.g. Houben, Roefs, & Jansen, 2010). In this sense, guilty pleasures are things that we enjoy but should avoid for prudential reasons. Extended to aesthetic consumption, this account of guilty pleasures would give us a characterization of guilty pleasures as aesthetic objects that either have pernicious effects on one's psychological condition or are a waste of time.

As for *social norms*, it is interesting to note that everyday discourse tends to connect guilty pleasures with *shame* or *embarrassment* rather than with guilt itself. Moreover, the other people's judgements seem to play a crucial role in the definition of guilty pleasures. The "Guilty Pleasures" playlist on Spotify (n.d.)[9] is prefaced by the words "Here are some of those songs that we all know and love … secretly," while the NPR book list entitled "My Guilty Pleasure" is introduced by the sentence "Authors recommend embarrassing, but addictive reads" (NPR books, n.d.).[10] All of this points to a definition of guilty pleasures as things we enjoy but would be ashamed to admit enjoying because others would disapprove. Applied to aesthetic objects, this leads to a definition of guilty pleasures as aesthetic objects we enjoy but enjoy secretly because our enjoyment violates social norms and would thereby attract the disapproval of our peers.

Finally, perhaps *personal norms* are involved in guilty pleasures. What we call personal norms here are the norms we impose on ourselves, the ones that derive from our self-ideal – the person we aspire to be. For example, an individual who aspires to be "manly" will impose on himself norms such as "Never cry" or "Show no weakness," but also "Never enjoy

girly shows or romantic comedies." Another individual who aspires to be "independent" or "rebellious" (in contrast to so-called "sheep") might impose on herself norms such as "Never go with the majority," "Never dress as others do," and "Never enjoy mainstream productions." To put it otherwise, to the extent that we aspire to be a certain kind of person, we impose norms on ourselves, both on our behavior and our taste. Indeed, aesthetic taste is tightly connected with our self-image: Our aesthetic defines us to a great extent. Introducing oneself as a classical music lover, a punk rock amateur, or a Star Wars fan will give very different images of one's self. Admitting that one loves *50 Shades of Grey* is not hard because of the poor quality of the book, it is hard because doing so will lead others to make a lot of uncharitable inferences about you.[11]

On the social and personal reading, guilty pleasures have nothing to do with their object's aesthetic properties: Rather, they are the symptoms of explicit and implicit boundaries that one takes to define one's social status and personal identity (see Lamont & Molnár, 2002). This is why McAvoy (2017) considers guilty pleasures as one way "to police the boundaries of our gendered, classed, aged, and other identities" (p. 184) and concludes that "the guilt in guilty pleasures helps regulate violations of social status and irregular crossings of stereotypical identities" (p. 192).

3.3 Two competing hypotheses

To determine whether the existence of guilty pleasures threatens the idea that most of us are, at heart, aesthetic nihilists, we must decide between the following two possibilities:

(1) The normativity at play in guilty pleasures is properly *aesthetic*: It depends on the object's aesthetic properties.
(2) The normativity at play in guilty pleasures is *non-aesthetic* (that is, external to the aesthetic realm): Guilty pleasures are judged to be inappropriate from a prudential, social, moral, or other non-aesthetic standpoint.

If (1) is correct, then the experience of guilty pleasures does constitute a counterexample to the experimental philosophers' claim that most people are aesthetic nihilists. However, if (2) is correct, then the phenomenon of guilty pleasures falls perfectly in line with the aforementioned empirical work on folk aesthetics. It might even provide an explanation for the apparent presence of aesthetic normativity in folk aesthetics, where there is, supposedly, no such thing.

Both accounts make different predictions. The first one, the aesthetic account, predicts that people's experience of a guilty pleasure (their

"feeling bad") will be explained and predicted by their belief that the aesthetic properties of the object of their enjoyment do not warrant their enjoyment. The second account, the non-aesthetic one, predicts that people's experience of a guilty pleasure will be explained and predicted by their belief that their enjoyment violates certain moral, social, prudential, or personal norms.

These predictions can hardly be tested from the armchair. Unfortunately, there is not much empirical work on the experience of guilty pleasures: The only study we were able to find investigated only the justifications people give for indulging in guilty pleasures such as "trash" TV shows (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). McCoy and Scarborough argued that the act of calling something a guilty pleasure is in fact a way of legitimizing or rationalizing the pleasure one takes in watching a "bad" TV show. They presupposed a non-aesthetic account of guilty pleasures, defining the distinction between "good" and "bad" art as a symbolic boundary that one can choose to violate.

No research has been done on whether the non-aesthetic account is indeed a better interpretation of guilty pleasures than the aesthetic account. This is why we decided to conduct our own series of experiments, through which we aimed to reach a better understanding of the source of guilty pleasures and the norms involved.

The purpose of each experiment can be summarized as follows:

(1) Study 1 investigates the kind of experience people refer to when they talk about guilty pleasures and to which extent these experiences actually involve the feeling that one should not enjoy a certain work of art.
(2) Study 2 focuses on the subset of guilty pleasures that actually involve the feeling that one enjoys something one should not enjoy and directly asks participants about the causes of this feeling.
(3) Study 3 continues to investigate the cause for one's feelings that one should not enjoy what one actually enjoys but using more indirect methods.

4. Study 1: the place of negative feelings in guilty pleasures

4.1. Materials and methods

So far, we have assumed that guilty pleasures are instances in which one enjoys a certain object of aesthetic consumption while having the uneasy feeling that one should not enjoy said object. However, before going further, we should begin by putting this basic assumption to the test.

To this end, we decided to instruct people to think about one of their own guilty pleasures and ask them to what extent they felt that they should not enjoy it. We recruited participants living in the United States through Amazon Mechanical Turk.[12] We originally aimed at a total of 100 participants but had to exclude participants who did not properly answer open-ended questions and recruit new ones. We finally reached a total of 101 participants, with the average age of 35.4, after exclusion (53 men, 47 women, 1 other; M_{age} = 35.4, SD_{age} = 11.1). Participants were paid $1 for their participation.

As a first step, participants were asked to complete the following task:

> We are researchers investigating how people think about artworks, media and other objects of aesthetic consumption. You will be asked a few questions about the kind of artworks you enjoy. Note that "artwork" should be understood in a broad sense, encompassing such things as novels, movies, shows, songs, etc.
>
> (Q1) Sometimes, when we discuss works of art (in the broad sense) we enjoy, we call some of them "guilty pleasure". Please, explain in your own words what a "guilty pleasure" (in the case of works of art) is:

After that, the participants were asked the following:

> (Q2) Think of your own guilty pleasures and give an example.
>
> (Q3) Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about this object (multiple answers are allowed):

- I consider this to be a guilty pleasure because I enjoy it though it has no (or little) artistic value.
- I consider this to be a guilty pleasure because I enjoy it though it would be best for me not to enjoy it.
- I consider this to be a guilty pleasure because I enjoy it though it is morally or socially unacceptable for me to enjoy it.
- I consider this to be a guilty pleasure because I enjoy it though I don't want to be kind of person that enjoys this kind of work.
- Other

The first choice refers to artistic norms, the second refers to prudential norms, the third one to social and moral norms, and the fourth one to personal norms. Choices were presented in a random order.

Finally, participants were asked the following:

> (Q4) How much do you agree with the following statements (1 = "Totally disagree," 7 = "Totally agree"):

- I feel bad about enjoying this work.
- I feel like I should not enjoy this work.

4.2. Main results: negative feelings scores

Here, we focus on participants' answers to (Q3) and (Q4) (see the supplementary materials for participants' answers to Q1 and Q2). Results are summarized in Figure 1.

Let's first focus on negative feelings scores, obtained through averaging participants' answers to (Q4).[13] As one can see in Figure 1(c), and to our surprise, it is not true that all instances of guilty pleasures involve negative affects, feelings that one should not enjoy what one enjoys. In fact, the most frequent score was 1 (for no negative feelings), and only 42 participants out of 101 obtained a negative feelings score superior to 4 (the midpoint). Thus, only a subset of what people call 'guilty pleasures' actually involve the feeling that one is transgressing a norm, and this is the subset we will need to focus on in subsequent studies, given that our goal is to determine the kinds of norms at play in one's evaluation of one's own aesthetic experience.

4.3. Additional analyses – negative feelings scores in function of participants' explanations

However, before skipping to the next step, is it possible to identify and better characterize the subset of guilty pleasures that does involve negative feelings? To answer this question, we decided to analyze participants' negative feelings score in function of their explanations for why they called a particular work of art a guilty pleasure. As one can see in Figure 1(a), participants' explanations range over all of our categories. The artistic explanation was selected most often (42%), while the personal explanation was selected least often (19%). However, not all categories seem to have the same connection to participants' negative feelings. As shown in Figure 1(b), whether or not participants selected the personal explanation seems to make more of a difference to participants' negative feelings than whether or not they selected the artistic explanation.

To determine which kind of explanations were more predictive of participants' negative feelings, we examined participants' answers to (Q4). We conducted a mediation analysis with negative feelings as a dependent variable and participants' choice of explanation(s) (whether they selected a given justification) as four binary independent variables. The results, presented in Table 1, suggest that the use of artistic and social justifications to categorize something as a guilty pleasure poorly predict the occurrence of negative feelings, while prudential and, most of all, personal justifications seem to have a tighter link with negative feelings.

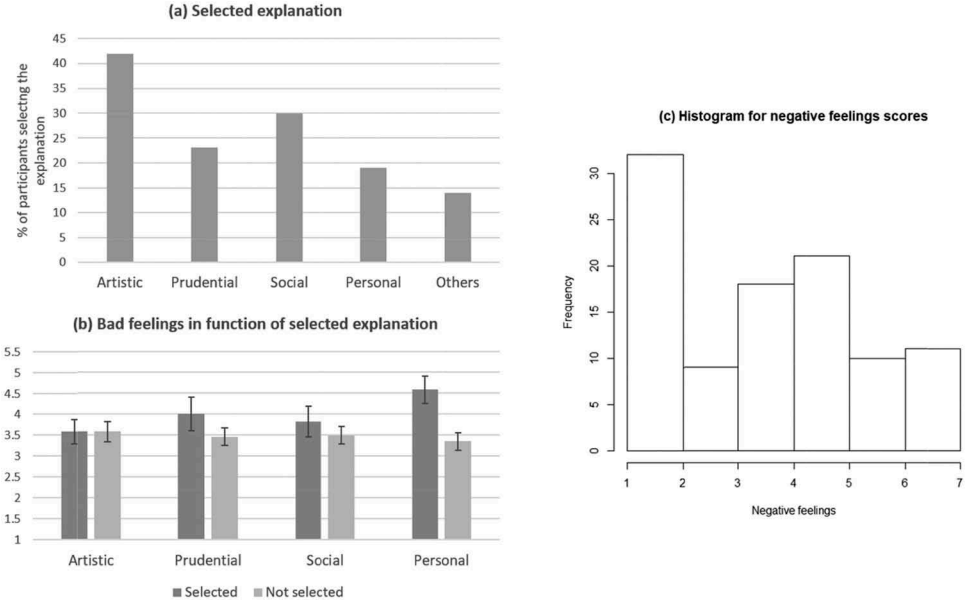

Figure 1. Participants' answers to (Q3) and (Q4) (Study 1). (a) Proportion of participants selecting each explanation. (b) Negative feelings scores in function of whether participants selected target explanation. Error bars indicate standard error of the mean. (c) Histogram of negative feelings scores.

Table 1. Multiple linear regression analysis for Study 1. °: $p < .10$, ***: $p < .001$.

Model	B	SE-B	B	*p*
(Constant)	2.71	.38		<.001
Artistic	.55	.42	.15	.19
Prudential	.88	.48	.20	.07°
Social	.70	.43	.17	.11
Personal	1.28	.46	.27	.006***

4.4. Discussion

Our results suggest that people use the expression 'guilty pleasures' to describe very different cases: things they enjoy despite their lack of artistic value or things they enjoy despite being socially unacceptable. More surprisingly, and despite the "guilt" in the expression 'guilty pleasures,' not all describe guilty pleasures as involving negative feelings or a feeling that one's enjoyment is misguided.

We are, however, primarily interested in this particular experience and the underlying normativity. Therefore, the following studies will focus on a subset of guilty pleasures: those which involve such negative feelings. However, further research into the phenomenon should take into the consideration the existence of "cold" guilty pleasures, which do not involve a negative emotional experience.

Interestingly, these "cold" guilty pleasures were often related to artistic justifications for use of the label 'guilty pleasures.' This might point to the fact that some participants use the term 'guilty pleasures' to refer to works that they genuinely consider to be "bad" but are nevertheless able to enjoy in a specific, distanced way that does not warrant "guilt" – such as the "so bad it's good" attitude Sontag (1964) considered characteristic of "camp." Indeed, in their recent investigation of the everyday consumption of "bad" TV shows, McCoy and Scarborough (2014) found that a certain number of viewers are able to justify and accept their own consumption of such shows by arguing that they only watch them from an "ironic" or "campy" point of view. Perhaps such people tend to call the object a 'guilty pleasure' as a way to recognize its badness (and thereby reaffirm their endorsement of high cultural norms), while actually avoiding the "guilt" by adopting a distanced outlook that is characteristic of "high" culture (Bourdieu, 1972/1977).

However, what we are interested in here are not people who are able to openly engage with "bad" art without the sting of "guilt," but rather those who suffer from an inner conflict between their experience (what they actually enjoy) and their norms (what they should enjoy). These are the cases we focus on in the next two studies.

5. Study 2: Participants' explanations for their negative feelings in guilty pleasures

5.1. Materials and method

In our first study, we asked people about their definition and conception of guilty pleasures. However, we are more interested in what makes people "feel bad" about their enjoyment, and it turned out not to be the same thing, as some participants did not seem to feel very bad about their guilty pleasures. To explore the source of this discomfort, we recruited 140 participants (68 men and 72 women) living in the United States through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were, on average, 37 years old (SD = 13.6) and were paid \$0.40 for their participation in our survey.

First, participants received the following definition of 'guilty pleasures,' designed to draw their attention toward the cases we were interested in: "a seemingly paradoxical experience of a work of art (in a broad sense: e.g. a movie, a song, a painting, a TV show): you enjoy it, but at the same time you feel bad about enjoying it." Then, they were asked (1) to remember and describe one of their own guilty pleasures and (2) to explain in their own words why they felt bad about enjoying this particular object.

After answering these two open questions, participants were asked to rate their agreements with a series of 15 statements about the object they remembered (on a scale ranging from 1 = "TOTALLY DISAGREE" to 7 = "TOTALLY AGREE"). Statements were displayed in a random order.

Two statements were control statements, in order to ensure that the particular experience they remembered actually fits our definition of a guilty pleasure:

(C1) "I really enjoy this work."

(C2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work."

Then, an additional series of statements probed the normative dimension of their experience:

(N1) "I feel like I should not enjoy this work."

(N2) "I feel like my enjoyment of this work is wrong and misguided."

The following statements probed the extent to which they identified with their negative feeling or instead rejected it:

(I1) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because my enjoyment is in conflict with my own opinions and thoughts about the work."

(I2) "Though I feel bad about enjoying this work, I do not think this feeling is warranted, and I would be happy to get rid of it."

(I3) "I consider my negative feelings about enjoying this work as warranted, and I really want to be able to change myself and no longer enjoy this kind of work."

The remaining statements were designed to test different explanations for the negative experience of guilty pleasures. The following two statements probed the aesthetic account of guilty pleasures. According to this account, participants feel bad because they think their enjoyment does not match the aesthetic value of its object.

(Art1) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because there is nothing in this work that could possibly justify my enjoyment."

(Art2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because there is, objectively speaking, nothing good about it."

However, one might think that these statements are a bit too strong; maybe people think that there are such things as aesthetic norms but consider them to be culturally variable and thus determined by what is judged to be aesthetically valuable by most people in their culture. This is why we also tested for the intersubjective explanation, according to which negative feelings arise due to a perceived mismatch between one's experience and the experiences of others:

(Int1) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because most people I know do not enjoy it."

(Int2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because my enjoyment does not match other people's experience."

We then tested for a variety of non-aesthetic accounts of guilty pleasures. According to the personal explanation, negative feelings are triggered by the belief that the person one aspires to be would not enjoy this kind of work. This was tested by the following questions:

(Personal1) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because people I admire would probably not enjoy this kind of work."

(Personal2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because the person I aspire to be would probably not enjoy this kind of work."

Then, we tested for the social explanation, according to which one feels bad because one is afraid and ashamed of what other people might think of one's enjoyment. Negative feelings are triggered because one violates non-aesthetic norms which are endorsed by other people. This was probed by the following statements:

(Social1) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because, if someone else learns that I enjoy this kind of work, this would reflect poorly on me."

(Social2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work because I'm afraid of what other people think of people who enjoy this kind of artwork."

Finally, participants had to answer a list of additional questions about their aesthetic experiences (for example, about the frequency of their experience of guilty pleasures) that we have not reported here due to the lack of direct relevance it has to our project. (However, these questions and their answers can be consulted in the supplementary materials.)

5.2. Main results – participants' explanations for their negative feelings

We began by ensuring that all of our participants experienced the kind of situations we were interested in (i.e. situations in which they enjoyed a work but felt bad about enjoying it) by excluding participants who gave an answer inferior to 4 (the midpoint) to one or both of our control questions and participants who described an irrelevant situation in the open questions (e.g. guilty pleasures about food). After exclusion, only 89 participants remained, which might reflect once again the fact that an important number of participants did not use the term 'guilty pleasures' in the particular sense we wanted to explore (most excluded participants reported enough enjoyment but not enough negative feelings).

What was the source of participants' negative feelings? Participants' agreement with the competing hypotheses is presented in Table 2. As can be seen, the highest-rated explanations are those concerning personal and social norms: The focus seems to be not on the object and its properties but on the appraiser and what her enjoyment reveals about her character and dispositions. This is also apparent in participants' open answers, which rarely focus on the object's aesthetic properties but rather on the kind of person who usually enjoys this kind of work or the moral and personal value the work conflicts with. For example, one participant gave the following example of a guilty pleasure:

> 50 shades of Grey – the book. I enjoyed reading this book yet, at the same time felt terrible for enjoying it.

When asked why she felt bad about reading the book, this participant replied:

Table 2. Mean (and standard deviation) for participants' agreement with each explanation of their negative feelings. For each explanation, student t-tests were used to test whether the average score significantly differed from the midpoint (4). *: $p < .05$, ***: $p < .001$.

Hypotheses	Aesthetic	Intersubjective	Personal	Social
Statement 1	3.74 (1.82)	3.91 (1.86)	4.58 (2.04)	4.44 (1.92)
Statement 2	4.16 (2.03)	3.57 (1.80)	4.76 (1.94)	4.47 (2.08)
AVERAGE	**3.95**	**3.74**	**4.67*** **	**4.45***

> I felt bad about enjoying this book as it was degrading to women. It gave great detail (sic) the torture and pain given to the lady and the emotional blackmail used towards her.

Thus, it seems that the normativity for most participants is mostly tied to non-aesthetic standards, which are either one's personal ideals or certain social expectations one is concerned with meeting.

5.3. Additional analyses – participants' identification with their negative feelings

Additionally, we analyzed to what extent a normative dimension infused participants' experiences of guilty pleasure and to what extent they identified with this perceived normativity. Results are presented in Table 3.

Bear in mind that, for all statements, the midpoint is 4; answers below 4 tend to indicate disagreement while answers above tend to indicate agreement. What these answers suggest is that participants acknowledge some kind of normativity (N1: they feel like they should not enjoy a given object) but do not believe their enjoyment to be misguided (N2). Moreover, while they tend to perceive a tension between their enjoyment and their other cognitive states (I1), they would rather get rid of their negative feeling (I2) than their enjoyment (I3), suggesting that most of our participants identify more strongly with the "pleasure" rather than the "guilt" of guilty pleasures. They would rather get rid of this negative feeling.

5.4. Discussion

The results of the present study strongly suggest that, when people feel bad about enjoying certain works of art (i.e. when they experience guilty pleasures), this is not because they consider their enjoyment to be missing its target. They do not negatively assess their enjoyment on the basis of aesthetic standards; rather, normativity seems to come from non-aesthetic sources, such as one's personal ideals and existing social norms about enjoyment. Thus, our results support a non-aesthetic account of guilty pleasures.

Table 3. Mean (and standard deviation) for participants' agreement with the first five statements. The difference from the scale's midpoint was tested using student t-tests. ***: $p < .001$.

N1*(Should not enjoy)*	N2*(Enjoyment is mistaken)*	I1*(Internal conflict)*	I2*(Negative feeling is not justified)*	I3*(Negative feeling warranted)*
4.95 (1.79)***	3.89 (1.72)	4.66 (1.83)***	4.24 (1.74)	3.23 (1.88)***

There is, however, one main problem with our study. It directly asks people for their explanation of their negative feelings; however, people might be incorrect in assessing their own feelings. If so, then we would only be tapping into people's explicit theories about the source of their guilty pleasures rather than their real sources. To make up for this limitation, we decided to run a third study, in which participants were not directly asked for an explanation.

There was also a second shortcoming in the present study. Questions which were supposed to probe the aesthetic explanation might not have been precise enough and might have been interpreted by participants as concerning reasons in general rather than aesthetic reasons in particular. For example, the statement "I feel bad about enjoying this work because there is nothing in this work that could possibly justify my enjoyment" can give rise to many different interpretations, given that one could think that one's enjoyment of a given work could be justified by non-aesthetic properties of this work. We also tried to correct this in Study 3 and made the questions probing the aesthetic explanation more precise.

6. Study 3: Which factors drive the negative component of guilty pleasures?

6.1. Materials and method

In this study, our goal was to explore the determinants of the negative experience of guilty pleasures by exploring the variables that can predict participants' negative feelings. To do so, we recruited 109 participants (54 men, 53 women, 2 non-identified) living in the United States through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were on average 36.8 years old (SD = 13.6) and were paid \$0.50 for their participation in our survey.

As in the second study, participants received a definition of guilty pleasures and were asked (1) to remember and describe one of their own guilty pleasures and (2) to explain in their own words why they felt bad about enjoying the object of said guilty pleasure. After answering these two open questions, participants were then asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with a series of 18 statements about the object they remembered (on a scale ranging from 1 = "TOTALLY DISAGREE" to 7 = "TOTALLY AGREE"). Statements were displayed in random order. Again, two statements were control statements in order to ensure that the particular experience the participants remembered actually fit with our definition of a guilty pleasure:

(C1) "I really enjoy this work."

(C2) "I feel bad about enjoying this work."

Then, an additional series of statements probed the normative dimension of their experience:

(N1) "I feel like I should not enjoy this work."

(N2) "I feel like my enjoyment of this work is wrong and misguided."

The following statements probed the extent to which participants identified with or rejected their negative feeling. These statements were slightly different from the ones we used in Study 1, as they no longer started with "I feel bad about enjoying this work because":

(I1) "My enjoyment is in conflict with my own opinions and thoughts about the work."

(I2) "I don't think that enjoying this work is warranted, and I would prefer not to enjoy it anymore."

(I3) "I consider my negative feelings about enjoying this work as warranted, and I really want to be able to change myself and no longer enjoy this kind of work."

The remaining statements were designed to test different explanations for the negative component of guilty pleasures. For example, the aesthetic interpretation, according to which participants feel bad because they think their enjoyment does not match the intrinsic aesthetic value of its object, was probed by the following three statements. Note that these statements differ from the ones used in Study 2, for reasons discussed in the previous section:

(Art1) "From a purely artistic and aesthetic point of view, there is objectively speaking nothing good about this object."

(Art2) "If I were to write an art review, I would say the object of my enjoyment is a poor work of art."

(Art3) "Putting aside my personal feelings, I would not recommend this object to other people on the sole basis of its artistic qualities."

The intersubjective explanation was tested by the following statements:

(Int1) "Most people I know do not enjoy this work."

(Int2) "My enjoyment of this work does not match other people's experience."

The personal explanation was tested by:

(Personal1) "People I admire would probably not enjoy this kind of work."

(Personal2) "The person I aspire to be would not enjoy this kind of work."

The social explanation was probed by:

(Social1) "If someone else learns that I enjoy this kind of work, this would reflect poorly on me."

(Social2) "I'm afraid of what other people think of people who enjoy this kind of artwork."

Finally, based on the analysis of participants' answers to open questions in Study 2, we tested for an alternative explanation, which we did not discuss in Studies 1 and 2, according to which people feel bad because they see very little *intellectual* value and utility in the relevant work, making engaging with said work a waste of their time:

(Intellectual1) "This work is not very complex or intellectual."

(Intellectual2) "This work conveys false information."

After that, people answered the same additional questions as in Study 2.

6.2. Main results – determinants of participants' negative feelings

This time, we did not exclude the participants who gave an answer lower than 4 to at least one of our control questions. Given that the analyses we planned were correlational in nature, it was not a problem if some participants reported low levels of negative feelings. In fact, it was better to have a wide array of answers and great variability.

To investigate the determinants of participants' negative feelings, we averaged participants' agreement with the 11 explanation statements to form five different scores corresponding to our five possible explanations: aesthetic, intersubjective, personal, social, and intellectual. We then conducted a linear regression analysis to determine to what extent each of these five scores predicted participants' negative feelings. The analysis used participants' answers to (C2) as a dependent variable and participants' aesthetic, intersubjectivity, personal, social, and intellectual scores as predictor variables. The results are presented in Table 4.

Multiple regression analyses allow for the investigation of the relationship between a target variable and other variables while correcting the potential relationships between these other variables. As shown in Table 4, once this correction is applied, only two scores really predict participants' negative feelings: the personal and the social. This means that only participants' ideals and social norms predicted their bad feelings, while other

Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis for Study 3. *: $p < .05$, **: $p < .01$.

Model	B	SE-B	β	*p*
(Constant)	2.21	.51		<.001
Aesthetic	−.12	.11	−.14	.27
Intersubjectivity	−.15	.09	−.16	.10
Personal	.41	.061	.42	<.01**
Social	.24	.10	.28	<.05*
Intellectual	.12	.10	.12	.25

factors did not. Considerations about the aesthetic value of the work did not predict negative feelings; on the contrary, they even tended to negatively predict them (though this negative relationship did not turn out to be significant).

As in Study 2, it seems that the normativity of guilty pleasures is primarily tied to non-aesthetic standards – either one's personal ideals or the social ideals one is concerned with meeting.

6.3. Additional analyses – participants' identification with their negative feelings

As in Study 2, we also analyzed the extent to which a normative dimension infused participants' experience of a guilty pleasure and to what extent they identified with this perceived normativity. The results are presented in Table 5.

What these answers suggest is in line with the results we obtained in Study 2: Participants acknowledged some kind of normativity (N1: they felt like they should not enjoy a given object), but they did not claim that their enjoyment is misguided (N2). Thus, the normativity at stake does not seem to be internal to enjoyment itself. Moreover, while they tended to perceive a tension between their enjoyment and their other cognitive states (I1), they would rather get rid of their negative feeling (I2) than their enjoyment (I3), which suggests that, once again, most of our participants identified with their "pleasure" rather than with the "guilt" of guilty pleasure.

7. General discussion: external norms and appraiser-directed normativity

Through three studies, our results suggested the following: (1) Certain (but not all) instances of guilty pleasures involve the negative feeling that one should not enjoy what one actually enjoys (Study 1), (2) People readily explain their negative feelings by saying that their enjoyment conflicts with social and personal norms but not with aesthetic ones (Study 2), and (3) People's negative feelings are indeed predicted by their perception of violating social and personal norms and not by their perception of violating aesthetic norms (Study 3). Overall, these results suggest that, to the extent that most people occasionally feel bad about enjoying certain

Table 5. Mean (and standard deviation) for agreement with the first seven statements. *: $p < .05$, **: $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

C(*Enjoy*)	C2(*Feel bad*)	N1(*Should not enjoy*)	N2(*Enjoyment is mistaken*)	I1(*Internal conflict*)	I2(*Enjoy-ment is not warranted*)	I3(*Negative feeling warranted*)
5.61 (1.23)***	4.42 (1.50)**	4.66 (1.68)***	4.04 (1.66)	4.63 (1.78)***	3.49 (1.92)**	3.61 (1.69)*

aesthetic artefacts and feel that they should not enjoy them, this feeling stems not from violations of aesthetic norms but from violations of personal and (to a lesser extent) social norms.

These results point to an interesting dimension of everyday aesthetics which is often overlooked in philosophical discussions. Our results suggest that the normativity to which people subject their own aesthetic attitudes has more to do with the dispositions and character traits which they take their enjoyments to reveal than with the object of their enjoyment itself and its properties. This is in line with the way people cope with their guilty pleasures: As investigated by McCoy and Scarborough (2014), people can try to escape their "guilt" by changing the nature of their enjoyment. For example, they may originally feel bad about enjoying certain TV shows, but they can overcome this feeling by persuading themselves that they enjoy it in a special (meta- or ironical) way. Thus, what they change is not the object of their enjoyment but the kinds of inferences they draw from their enjoyment: Liking a TV show for what it is and appreciating it in an ironic way do not allow for the same kind of inferences about character traits and intellectual aptitudes.

From this perspective, what people feel "guilty" about is not so much the fact that they enjoy "bad" artworks but, rather, the "bad" traits that their enjoyment supposedly reveals; as shown in our three studies, guilty pleasures are not so much about guilt (what people do) but about shame and embarrassment (who they are).[14] This is why we label the kind of normativity at play in guilty pleasures *appraiser-directed normativity*, as opposed to the *object-directed normativity* mainstream aesthetics tends to focus on.

The importance of appraiser-directed normativity supports an idea which is very common in sociological approaches of aesthetic taste: Aesthetic preferences are not evaluated for themselves but as cues of something else, such as one's social status or *appartenance* (Bourdieu, 1984). However, beyond social class, aesthetic preferences can be used as a basis for attributions of intellectual aptitudes (e.g. some works are more intellectually demanding than others), moral traits (e.g. enjoying sexist TV shows can be seen as a sign of a sexist disposition), or deviation from social standards (e.g. men who enjoy shows aimed at women might be considered as failing to meet the social standards of masculinity). This is why the clothes we wear often indicate something about our personality and why many teenagers use taste in music as a statement of personal identity. As one's aesthetic assessment is closely (or, at least, thought to be closely) related to one's personal ideals and internalized norms, a good way to know somebody is just to ask them about their aesthetic preferences.

What our results suggest is that, when it comes to explaining the experience of guilty pleasures and the negative feelings that come with

them, appraiser-directed normativity plays a more significant role than object-directed normativity. When people experience the feeling that their own enjoyment is wrong, they do not do so because they consider their pleasure to be inappropriate given the aesthetic properties of the object. Rather, they feel bad because they think that having those pleasures does not match their ideal self or the social norms that they have incorporated. This means that taste can be evaluated from a whole range of perspectives and that the construction and development of good taste can be motivated by various factors that are not inherently aesthetic.

In the end, this suggests that the phenomenon of guilty pleasures is compatible with experimental philosophers' claim that most people are aesthetic nihilists; because the normativity at stake in guilty pleasures stands outside of the aesthetic realm, it can play a role in people's lives even if they do not think that there are genuine aesthetic truths.

Of course, we do not claim to have fully understood the nature of guilty pleasures. So far, the topic has rarely been explored. As part of our contemporary aesthetic lives and as a valuable window into folk aesthetics, we hope the topic will garner more interest from philosophers.

Notes

1. However, the expression 'guilty pleasures' has not always been part of our aesthetic vocabulary: Journalist Szalai (2013, December 9) traces the rise of the expression back to the late 1990s.
2. http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=guilty%20pleasure.
3. On the alleged intersubjective validity of aesthetic judgement, see also Schellekens (2009) and Vandenabeele (2008).
4. Other interesting issues include explaining the recent rise of the term in folk aesthetics, examining its implications for the sociology of art, and discussing the value and usefulness of this kind of experience in our aesthetic lives.
5. For a more in-depth discussion of the methodological limitations of Cova and Pain's studies, see Cova (2018).
6. Guilty pleasures are not limited to sadism and chocolate (which can be criticized on volitional grounds) but include cheesy movies, corny pop music, and garish garage-sale landscape paintings. One might interpret the guilt-making features of these pleasures volitionally or cognitively, but they more naturally seem to be aesthetic judgements in the Kantian sense, that is, something like a recognition that we are treating as beautiful something which is merely agreeable or settling for the merely agreeable when we should aim for "higher" feelings (p. 179).
7. Friend (2010) presents a more sophisticated account of this type of emotional inappropriateness. She distinguishes between three ways of assessing "emotional warrant": fittingness, justification, and correctness.
8. http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=guilty%20pleasure.
9. https://play.spotify.com/user/spotify/playlist/7GuiQlzZPwaNHltEXRKQNC.
10. http://www.npr.org/series/104566969/my-guilty-pleasure.

11. Obviously, there is one sense of the expression 'social norms' in which personal norms are social: One's aspiration to be manly, for example, would not exist without a complex system of social representations such as gender distinction, collective idealization of manliness and virility, and so on. Whether one aspires to be manly is undoubtedly the result of socialization and particular social circumstances. In this sense, most personal norms are social norms, and the same is surely true for a lot of moral and even aesthetic norms. However, throughout this paper, we use the expression 'social norms' in a narrower and more specific sense. By 'social norms,' we mean norms that one is compelled to follow precisely because one fears others might disapprove of one's behavior if one does not. Thus, in this sense of 'social norms,' one is externally motivated by norms. On the contrary, what we call 'personal norms' are norms that have been internalized to the point where one is internally motivated to comply with said norms. One way to put it is that we call 'social norms' those norms that are experienced by agents as being enforced by the judgments of others, rather than coming from their own aspirations (personal norms) or from a transcendent order (moral and aesthetic norms).
12. Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is an online platform where people can be recruited to complete short online tasks. It has become increasingly popular among scholars when it comes to conducting empirical research (especially surveys). As with all samples, there are reasons to be cautious about generalizing from participants recruited through MTurk. However, it has been observed that MTurk participants are slightly more demographically diverse than standard internet samples, that they are significantly more diverse than typical American college samples, and that data obtained through MTurk are at least as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Moreover, further research has suggested that the amount workers are paid makes little difference once traditional comprehension checks and exclusion procedures are implemented (as we did in our studies; see Bohannon, 2011).
13. Participants' ratings for both statements were highly correlated ($r = .79$, $p < .001$), which warrants aggregation in a single score.
14. On this point, see the supplementary materials for Studies 2 and 3.

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Notes on contributors

Kris Goffin is a postdoctoral researcher at the Thumos Research Group, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland. His research focuses on philosophy of mind, philosophy of perception, emotion theory, and aesthetics.

Florian Cova is an Assistant Professor at University of Geneva's Philosophy Department. His research focuses on ways to empirically address traditional philosophical problems. As such, he has published research in both philosophy and psychology journals, on topics such as free will, intentional action, aesthetic judgment, moral judgment, and emotions.

ORCID

Kris Goffin http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9914-0289
Florian Cova http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9360-8290

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