

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
“CULTURE & EMOTIONS”
MAY 12 & 13, 2022
ENS DE LYON, LYON, FRANCE**

This conference stems from a paradox. Emotions and feelings are at the heart of individuals' lives and at the core of most of their cultural and leisure activities – indeed, they are major themes in the books we read, in the movies and TV series we watch, and they lay at the core of the effects produced by the consumption of our favorite works of fiction. However, few researchers have investigated the place of emotion in culture and the role they play within it. In France, with the exception of a few studies (Chedaleux et al., Hennion, Pasquier, Levaretto, etc.) and of “oblique references” in numerous other sociology of culture works (Glévarec, Mauger, Poliak & Pudal, Octobre et al., Péquignot, etc.), these two objects have often been analyzed independently within other specialized fields, by researchers who had little to no knowledge of each others' work (indeed, this object is at the crossroads of psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc.). They applied the analytical framework of feelings and emotions to “dominated” audiences (such as women or children). This trait is all the more startling compared to the English speaking world, where many studies take feelings and emotions as a research topic per se. The studies of fan cultures and reception produced in the field of cultural studies, which have rarely been translated into French, are a case in point. (Ang, Bobo, Brown, Corsaro, Hobson, Jenkins, McRobbie, Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, Radway, Skeggs & Wood, etc.). Similarly, the question of emotions and feelings is central in some works conducted in Asia, particularly those published in *Culture & Empathy*¹. Emotions and feelings are also mobilized as a central stake in some analyses of global neoliberalism (Cabanas & Illouz). Nonetheless, some fields of the social sciences in France (history and political science in particular) have been paying more and more attention to emotions and feelings; as for sociology, however, these concerns have yet to spread outside the boundaries of the sociology of labour. It might prove fruitful to open up a dialogue between the French sociology of culture and these English speaking researches or works focusing on different objects, in particular when they tackle shared issues, such as legitimacy (legitimate/illegitimate products; working class/middle class readings), acquisition

¹ <https://culturenempathy.org/journal-information/>

of taste, the speakable and the unspeakable, socially situated emotional discipline, etc.

The purpose of this conference is to *theoretically and empirically* investigate the reciprocal links between culture on one side and feelings or emotions on the other. More precisely, we shall simultaneously consider two ranges of questions. How do cultural practices, objects and taste affect feelings and emotions, how do they shape, rework or even frame them by propagating specific rules or norms – depending on the social properties of individuals and the contexts in which they evolve? Conversely, what effect do emotions have on the cultural repertoires of individuals, and particularly on the formation of likes and dislikes for specific works, practices, uses, registers or activities? In other words, our aim is to study both socialization to emotions (through culture) and socialization to culture (through emotions).

The CFP thus articulates four axes for research and reflection:

a) The first axis is theoretical and epistemological in nature. How can the studies or analyses of emotions/feelings question sociology in general, and sociology of culture in particular? What can emotions teach us about the social world and the hierarchies/inequalities/power relationships that structure it, about the processes of identification and integration to a social group, or about the shaping of a representation of society? There have been a few studies taking this path (Hochschild, Kemper, etc.), in the English speaking world in particular, but in France, despite several researchers pointing out the importance of the issue (Bernard, Brossard, Fernandez et al., Kaufmann & Quéré, Memmi et al.), reflection is still in its early stages, especially when it comes to methodology. How can we define emotions and feelings (and how to distinguish between the two)? What methodologies and source materials can be used to study them? What methodological vigilance should be adopted? The purpose here will be to target the various difficulties arising when studying “intimate”, “subjective” objects whose definitions were forged outside social sciences and propose ways to reintroduce these objects into our fields of research. How to account for the way emotions and feelings are formed, for their place and function in the (re)production of the social world and for the consequences they may have on the (unequal) construction of (unequal) individuals?

b) The second axis is concerned with the role played by cultural consumption, participation, mediation and objects, in the gendered / socially situated formation and management of emotions and feelings such as shame, fear, anger, contempt (in particular when directed at dominated groups) and the consequences it may have on the construction of the self. In this axis, we will try to account for and discuss the influence of books, movies, games and recreational practices on the legitimate definitions of feelings and emotions, on the socially valued ways to express them, to act them out and to act *on* them, in dominated and dominant groups (Vörös). To use Arlie Hochschild’s vocabulary, our aim here is to question the role of art works, cultural consumption and participation, and objects in the “emotional

work,” as well as the ways in which they contribute to the construction of “rules of feeling” and to their unequal enforcement. Another focus will shed light on the effects of cultural likes and dislikes on the shaping or the reinforcement of selective affinities, sentimental and affective relationships. To what extent are friendships, enmities and love relationships (successful or not) linked to the recreational and cultural activities? The role of intermediaries should also be questioned (Jeanpierre & Roueff) as well as the role of cultural industries at large in the making of emotions and feelings and/or in exploiting these emotions as merchandised goods (the so-called emodities). To what extent do the various actors of the cultural industries participate in the development of emotional capitalisms (Hochschild, Illouz, Pharo) and in the implementation of relationships in which emotions, feelings and affects are entangled within mercantile logics?

c) The third axis will take a reverse perspective on the link between culture and emotions or feelings, and investigate the effect of emotions and feelings on cultural practices and (dis)likes. This topic can be addressed directly: what role do emotions and feelings play in the shaping of our cultural preferences, and how do they contribute to making cultural choices a matter of identity? A more indirect approach can also be adopted: how do our friendships, love relationships, attractions and repulsions open us up to new cultural passions or to new dislikes? Is there an emotional dimension in the impact of those sociology calls “significant others” ? And under what social conditions does that impact play out? For instance, papers may investigate whether or not the socializing effects of shared practices and discussions shaping (dis)tastes are linked to the emotional investment of partakers. Could the affection individuals harbor for his “significant others” be the reason why socialization is “effective”, as suggested by Berger and Luckmann when they stated that primary socialization is the strongest, in particular because it is carried out by children's closest caretakers?

d) Finally, the fourth axis will focus on the ways cultural emotions and feelings affect individual trajectories. How can the concept of capital be articulated to that of cultural feelings and emotions (Priour & Savage, Reay, etc.)? To what extent can emotions and feelings be regarded as resources, or even capitals in their own right? If they are indeed resources, how can they be converted into capitals, and how can this “emotional capital” be converted and used on other markets? What are the effects and consequences of these capitals on social mobility and categorization?

The CfP is open to all social sciences (anthropology, economics, film studies, history, media studies, political science, sociology...). Papers should be based on an empirical corpus, whether textual analysis or audience studies. Interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives are welcome.

The conference is co-organised by the Department of Studies, Forecasting and Statistics (Ministry of Culture), the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon and the Centre Georges

Pompidou. It will be held at the ENS Lyon on 12 and 13 May 2022. The presentations will be recorded and put online after the conference on the Daps/Centre Georges Pompidou scientific resources platform (see <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/fr/offre-aux-professionnels/enseignants/portail-mediation-education>).

Proposals, either in French or English, must be submitted on the dedicated website. They should be 500 words maximum and specify the theoretical framework and data mobilized.

Conference website: <https://cultureemotions.sciencesconf.org/>

Calendar:

- October 15th, 2021: Closure of the CFP
- End of November, 2021: Decisions on the proposals
- May 12th & 13th, 2022: International Symposium

Organizing committee

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