

The special issue of *Nordicum-Mediterraneum*, 17(5)/2023, coordinated and edited by Paola de Cuzzani and Hans Marius Hansteen from the University of Bergen, and Mirella Pasini from the University of Genoa, contains articles based on lectures that were delivered at the conference held in Bergen, organized by the research group “Culture, Society and Politics”(Department of Philosophy, University of Bergen, Norway) on 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The purpose of this conference was to investigate the interactions between rationality and two passions that are suited as emotional cement for concerted social action: benevolence and solidarity. Emotions are in fact ambivalent and unpredictable; they cannot only be distinguished into positive and negative: even “positive” emotions - benevolence, inclusion, love - are capable of deception and pitfalls, while “negative” passions such as shame and indignation can unite the individual and society, and help to build individual and social identity. The speeches at the conference and the essays presented here address these issues, starting from the analysis of different concepts and emotional horizons. Concepts such as democracy, freedom of speech and justice were thus addressed, in relation to positive and negative moral feelings and solidarity.

This was the second main conference in the project “Rationality and the Emotions in Political Discourse”, which is based on the research group “Culture, Society and Politics” at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Bergen, in collaboration with international scholars who have long been engaged in joint activities of these topics.

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