

Symposium

The reason of passions: emotion and rationality in the landscape of (contemporary) politics.

Department of Philosophy, University of Bergen, November 28th -29th
Sydnesplassen 12/13, seminar-/meeting room at the ground floor

The purpose of this symposium is to approach the topic of the relations between rationality and emotions, wondering which part it actually plays in politics. In many ways, politics is the art of persuasion and too often reasonable arguments can only persuade people to a limited extent. In fact within the political landscape, through past and present, one will find a complex mixture of rational arguments and emotional discourses, while various models of rationality and emotions are confronted in the theoretical realm.

In one of his scholarly works, *The Passions and the Interests* (1977), Albert Hirschman described how the process of modernization transformed the "passions" motivating social and political behaviour into modern "interests" and they were thereby assigned the role of containing the social and political destructive passions. Until recently, theorists had described both political movements and political belonging as based on beliefs, ethics, and sentiment.

Do emotions, of any kind, pose a dangerous threat to rationality and political life? What becomes of democracy, for instance, when, in political debates, one replaces a rigorous and rational language with one focused on emotions, hope or fear? Is it possible to construct a democratic society without political passions, mutual trust and a belief in the right of every individual to participate in the social and political debates?

If so what kind of emotions are positive and what kind of emotions hinder this development?

We aim to explore the changing ways in which thought and feeling, rationality and passion, reason and sentiments have been understood in politics focusing both on the realm of the history of ideas and contemporary normative theory (moral, legal and political).

The symposium will seek to define the possible paths of reflection on this topic and study the relationships between reason and emotions, concepts of rationality and "structures of feelings" as a marker of political arena and democracy.

Organizers

The symposium is organised as collaboration between the Department of Philosophy (UiB) and the Department of Antiquity, Philosophy, History (DAFIST), University of Genoa, Italy

Program

Thursday 28th November

9.30-10.00: Coffee & welcome

10.00-10.45: Prof. Anat Biletzki, (Quinnipiac University USA and UiB): *"Populism - a tool of rationality, passions, or both?"*

10.45-11.00 *Coffee break*

11-11.45: Prof. Alberto Giordano, University of Genoa, (Italy), *"Post-Truth, Polarization and Other Emotional Threats to Democracy"*.

11.45-12.30: Ass. Prof. Anne Granberg, (UiB) *"Politics of identity and feelings"*

12.30 – 14.00: *Lunch*

14.00-14.45: Prof. Ingmar Meland, (Oslo-Met) «*A passion can only be overcome by a stronger passion*»– *Ernst Cassirer's philosophical anthropology and "the emotional turn"*

14.45-15.30: Researcher Johannes Servan,(UiB) «*The status of emotions in Arendt's notion of principles of action*»

15.30-15.45 *Coffee break*

15.45-16.30 Prof. Paola de Cuzzani (UiB) *"Populistic leaders, democracy and the mechanism of the imitation of affects"*

16.30-17.15: Prof. Jean Christophe Merle, (Vechta University, Germany), TBA

19.30: *Dinner*

Friday 29th November

10.00-10.45: Prof. Pascal Nouvel, (University of Tours, France), *"Errors in politics, an analysis of the concept of political error"*

10.45-11.30: Prof. Mirella Pasini, University of Genoa, (Italy), *"A new Galateo: looking for civil feelings against political polarization"*.

11.30-11.45 *Coffee break*

11.45- 12.30: Ass. Prof. Hans Marius Hansteen, (UiB) *"Polite conversation is no longer desirable". Peace and Agonism in the Rhetoric of Georg Johannesen (1931-2005)*

12.30-14.00: *Lunch*

14.00-14.45: Prof. Juliette Grange, (Université de Tours, France) « *A reasoned feeling* »

14.45-15.30: Prof. Andrew Paul Hill, (University of Akureyri, Iceland), *"Policing Emotions: Is there space for emotion and rationality in contemporary police education."*

15.30-15.45: *Coffee break*

15.45-16.30 Researcher Sveinung Sundfør Sivertsen,(UiB) *"The partially impartial spectator as a political ideal?"*

16.30-17.30 Discussion and planning future of research topic