
GIOVANNI GIORGINI AND ELENA IRRERA (EDS.),
THE ROOTS OF RESPECT. A HISTORIC-PHILOSOPHICAL ITINERARY,
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The book *The Roots of Respect*, edited by Giovanni Giorgini and Elena Irrera, represents the collection of closely connected essays that are written by several authors, mostly professors of social and political philosophy, including the editors of the book. It is the result of the interest for the nature of respect in ethical, political and legal sphere. The collection of essays aims to outline and critically discuss some of the most prominent theoretical expressions of the notion of respect in ancient, modern and contemporary times.

The book consists of three parts, and each of them of three essays. In the first part of the book, *Respect in Ancient Philosophy*, while investigating the notion of respect in Ancient Greek poetry, the author is claiming that the idea of respect for persons finds its roots in the culture and history of Ancient Greece, and suggests that it retains an aristocratic flavor. In the essay on the notion of respect, and what “belongs to” oneself, author explores Plato’s thought on respect. The most important claim made in this chapter is that Plato effects the necessary combination by using the notion of what is “ours”, or “belongs to” – is *oikeion* to – ourselves, so that it includes others and others’ interests as well as our own. The first part ends with Aristotle’s thoughts on respect for persons.

The second part, *Respect in Modern Philosophy*, is dedicated to Hobbes’ and Kant’s thought on respect for persons. In the first essay the author explores Hobbes’ thought on respect for persons and self-respect through his view on human interaction in the state of nature. The author attempts to identify different forms of respect for oneself and respect for others in Hobbes’ state of nature, by way of an identification and critical engagement with some of the key notions which inform his view of the mechanism of human interaction: power, recognition, honor, esteem and fear. In the next essays on Kant’s theory of respect, the author argues that Kant distinguishes between *two different kinds of respect: reverential*, that is a feeling that a person experiences towards whatever is morally warranted and that will lead her to do what is morally warranted, provided that she has cultivated a calm state of mind. Author explains that respect understood as reverential is the source of moral motivation that includes not purely intellect, but also the feeling of respect. She argues that, according to Kant, respect is a special kind of feeling, which can give rise to specific inclinations. But unlike other feelings that are pathological, respect depends on the exercise of our own practical reason. In contrast, *observantia* consists

in a set of actions she has to perform in response to certain morally relevant features of persons, for instance their dignity. Observantia includes actions that we owe to others. The author also examines the respect as the foundation of human rights, but draws an important and relatively novel conclusion that Kant does not have a concept of human rights at all, and that rights are connected to the respect for persons. The third part of the book, named *From Modern to Contemporary Perspectives on Respect*, gives insight into thoughts of four authors. First, Hegel's theory of "abstract" respect for "abstract" personhood is discussed. In the next essay the author explores the idea of respect for persons in John Stuart Mill's thought, focusing on individuality and the sense of dignity. The idea of equal respect as something which we owe to each other underlies some of the most notable contemporary attempts to conceptualize respect in liberally-oriented political communities. One outstanding example is the work of John Stuart Mill. The author investigates the sense of dignity, a feeling of self-respect and its relation to self-development and the life of justice, and points out that the sense of dignity is the foundation upon which the respect of the rights, liberty and individuality of others is to be built. Further, he raises the question whether a utilitarian can accommodate the idea of respect for persons, irrespective of losses in social utility. The last essay is dedicated to the role of respect and self-respect for Rawls' and Walzer's theories of justice, and provides a comparative analysis of both philosophers. The author demonstrated why the notion of respect and self-respect plays a central role in Rawls' and Walzer's theories of justice.

The notion of "respect" plays an important role in contemporary ethical and political theory. The authors examine the idea of equal respect of persons that is rooted in the fundamental values of equality, freedom and dignity. It is discussed the nature and different kinds of respect and its historic and philosophical roots are discussed. The book has two aims: first,

conceptual clarification of the ways in which the notion of respect and its manifold connotations are articulated in ancient, modern and contemporary philosophy and how it might act as a suitable historic and theoretical basis for a fruitful discussion of the supposed normative role of respect in the public domain; second, addressing the theme of respect for persons from the point of view of the history of philosophy may fruitfully contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature and implications of issues such as ethical virtues, political justice and the human good. (p. 2) These considerations may offer a fresh new lens through which elements of analogy, continuity and rupture between philosophical theories belonging to different times and contexts might be put in better focus. (p. 2). This study is a historic/philosophical investigation of the nature of respect and the related notion of recognition. The authors explain how the notion is developed across the history of philosophy.

The editors intend to provide the answers to the following set of questions: 1) how many kinds of respect can be traced in the history of philosophy? 2) What are the most seminal attempts to conceptualize such kinds of respect? 3) Did such attempts affect the contemporary reflection on the problems of respect, justice and human rights, and how? 4) How do various kinds of respect for persons interlace with the value of "self-respect"? Do the two notions contribute to reciprocally shape their meaning and range implications? (p. 3) The working hypothesis underlying this volume is that the contemporary formulation of respect presents itself as the upshot of a process of theoretical reflection which finds its roots in classical antiquity and incorporates a collection of themes already at work in philosophers like Plato and Aristotle: the feeling of shame, rational agency, ethical virtue, justice, reciprocity, moral equality and abidance by the law. (p. 3). The aim is to offer an account of respect which involves all of these characteristics and recognition and politics and human rights.

The essays included in this volume do not aim to provide conclusive answers regarding the role played by the issue of respect for persons in ancient, modern and contemporary philosophy. Rather, they simply mean to offer some plausible suggestions on knowledge, morality and politics which the reader might find profitable for his or her own reconstruction of the notion of respect through the history of philosophy. (p. 15) Nevertheless, the collection represents systematic study of the notion of respect, which gets into the very core of the notion. Although the authors display the thoughts of other famous philosophers, they do that with personal comments, critical review and evaluation of the arguments of authors. In that way they give personal and original contribution to the topics of the essays.

The approach of the authors combines analytical aspects with historic-philosophical insights. By providing critical reconstruction of the thoughts of mentioned philosophers the authors go through the most important aspects of the human life. The respect represents a complex phenomenon produced by an intersection of beliefs, perceptions, judgments, emotions, feelings and ways of experiencing things. Viewed under this light, the attitude of respect encompasses a range of cognitive, affective, motivational and evaluative dimensions. It investigates the essence of human beings, the special kind of feeling and relation to ourselves and other people: self-respect, respect to others, dignity, recognition, honor, thus something that underlies our status as human beings capable of moral actions.