

Cicero on Different Kinds of Respect for Persons. A ‘Darwallian’ Approach

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ABSTRACT

The present paper will investigate the notion of “respect” and its plurality of expressions in the work of Cicero. Such an investigation will be conducted by way of a reading of selected passages from his *De Republica*, *De Legibus* and *De Officiis*. With a view to this, I shall make use of the conceptual taxonomy of respect worked out by a contemporary political philosopher, Stephen Darwall. In his *Two Kinds of Respect*, 1977, and *The second person standpoint*, 2006, he draws a distinction between four different kinds of respect: (1) what he calls “appraisal respect”, that is, a relational attitude grounded on the recognition of a supposed ethical or intellectual excellence of the respected subject; (2) a form called “respect as honour”, that is, an asymmetrical attitude based on the acceptance of a privileged role or social position held by the respected subject and, therefore, an attitude grounded on the recognition of the latter’s authority to claim such a kind of treatment; (3) respect for “epistemic authority”, which has as its basis a kind of recognition of the technical expertise of the respected subject relative to a given field of knowledge; (4) respect as “second-personal reciprocal recognition”. Such a kind of respect - probably the most relevant one from a political point of view - is grounded on the recognition of the moral authority of each and every member of the political community. By applying Darwall’s conceptual models of respect to the analysis of Cicero’s works, I shall attempt to show that the all four kinds of respect mentioned above make their appearance in Cicero’s works, and that each of them, instead of subsisting separately from the other kinds, is forged by the intersection with at least one of the others.

Key Words

Cicero, Darwall, respect, honour, epistemic authority

Introduction

Among the ethical and political issues that Cicero invites his readers to critically assess across his writings, respect figures as one which does not seem to have enjoyed special consideration, not even among specialised scholars. This might be due to a number of reasons. In the first place, the absence of a uniformly direct and well-expanded discussion of cases of respect for persons and values may prompt us to hypothesise that a philosophical theorisation of different forms of respect does not represent one of his most prominent concerns. Also, the vast array of roles and nuances that the notion at stake assumes in his works (not to

mention the corresponding lexical variety adopted by him to frame such a semantic multifariousness) makes it hard for us to pin down a focal meaning around which the plurality of its expressions might revolve. We might wonder, then, whether the above mentioned difficulties provide us with valid reasons for shirking from the task of theoretically penetrating the notion of respect and identify its distinctive function within the corpus of Cicero's writings.

In the attempt to understand to what extent the issue of respect has been addressed in Cicero's philosophical thought, I shall generally contend that, despite misapprehension to the contrary, the author displays a lively interest in the notion at stake, and careful attempt to bring out its sense in his philosophical works might inject new life to the study of his political views. More specifically, I will argue that at least four main different patterns of respect for persons can be teased out of Cicero's works, and that each derives its nature and distinctive role from intersection (and, occasionally, even from some sort of "contamination") with some of the others. With a view to this task, I shall conduct my investigation of Cicero in the light of a conceptual taxonomy worked out by the contemporary philosopher Stephen Darwall¹. Darwall identifies (a) a form of respect as appraisal of virtuous moral conduct (*appraisal respect*); (b) respect as allegiance to the competence of the respected subject in a given field of knowledge and or/action (*respect of epistemic authority*); (c) honour based on recognition of social roles (*respect as honour*); (d) a form of respect that is equally owed to each human being *qua* human being (*equal recognition respect*).

In the first part of my discussion of Cicero's thought, I will lay particular emphasis on the relation between respect as appraisal of ethical conduct and recognition of individuals as "authorities". In the second part I will attempt to show in what way Cicero makes use of respect, conceived as "reverential honour", with a view to shaping the nature of "equal" respect. I will propose that mutual *reverentia* has the power to promote the fundamentals of a well-ordered *res publica*, independently of the specific form of government that guides it. Because of the breadth of the topic, this essay can offer only an overview of some possible applications of the notion of respect in Cicero's arguments, but I hope it will be enough to give some idea how philosophically rich and challenging such a concept appears to be in his work and in his cultural background.

¹ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", *Ethics* 88(1977), pp. 36-49: 37-45; cf. his "Due tipi di rispetto come riconoscimento per le persone", In I. Carter, A.E. Galeotti, V. Ottonelli (eds.), *Egual Rispetto*, cit., pp. 1-23: 7; *The Second-Person Standpoint. Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, cit., p. 122), Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2006.

1. Darwall's taxonomy of respect

The question of respect has attracted an enormous amount of philosophical attention in recent decades. If addressed from the standpoint of political theorists and human-rights thinkers, respect can be viewed both in terms of a simple object of duty, that is, one which we owe to all human beings in equal degree², and as a principle endowed with the power to negotiate tensions inherent in political life. More generally, respect can be defined as a complex relationship subsisting between two persons (the respecifier and the respected), some characteristic (the basis of respect), and some evaluative point of view (from which the person is respected). This relationship consists, roughly, in the respecifier's judging that the characteristic possessed by a given person is a good thing to possess, her subsequent appreciation of the characteristic at stake and of the reasons which make it good, and his being disposed to do what is appropriate to the person's having that characteristic³. Viewed under this light, the idea of "respect for persons" harkens back to the ethical dimension of human relationships and to the sphere of the individual nature, the latter being conceived not simply in abstract terms, but also with regard to a set of individual traits, such as professional and/or moral qualities⁴.

In his article "Two Kinds of Respect"⁵, Darwall identifies two different ways in which persons may be viewed as proper objects of respect. A first kind of respect consists in an attitude of positive regard for a given person, either as human agent or as engaged in some particular pursuit. Such a kind of respect, which Darwall names "appraisal respect", is not one that is accorded equally and universally to persons; on the contrary, it is one whose basis is an appreciation of the excellence that accompanies the moral conduct displayed by the respected subject. Appraisal respect, as Darwall conceives of it, differs from a mere feeling of esteem in that the "differential" treatment it presupposes is not grounded in any kind of appreciation of technical abilities by themselves, but is structurally grounded in recognition of moral desert⁶. The distinctive excellence of the respected subject can be manifested either in ordinary behavior or in the performance of specific technical pursuits. As Darwall explains, one may have such respect for someone's integrity and good qualities on the whole, but also for someone as an expert in a given field of action⁷. For instance, we might show

² See J. Raz, *Value, Respect and Attachment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001: 159.

³ See C. Cranor, "Toward a Theory of Respect for Persons", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 12(1975): 303-319. Such a generic view of respect is taken up by S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: 37.

⁴ See R. Mordacci, *Rispetto*, Milano, Cortina editore, 2012: 10-11.

⁵ See footnote 1 above.

⁶ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: pp. 38-39.

⁷ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: p. 39.

appraisal respect for a tennis player whose professional skills are accompanied by an attitude of regard for her adversary and abstention from inappropriate behaviour, but not for players who, although being widely acclaimed as excellent practitioners, might pay no attention to ethically appropriate standards of behaviour towards their adversaries⁸.

As such, appraisal respect for a person does not entail a desire to imitate her, nor does it involve any conception of how one's behaviour toward that person should be possibly adjusted. A second, different kind of respect is the one which Darwall calls "recognition respect". Broadly speaking, this is a sort of regard for persons or "objects" (like laws or nature) that consists in giving them the proper weight in deliberations about how to act. As the scholar claims, "to respect something in this way is just to regard it as something to be reckoned with (in the appropriate way) and to act accordingly"⁹. Unlike appraisal respect, then, recognition respect presupposes the respecifier's awareness of the existence of a bond with the respected subject, that is, a tie which, when recognized, becomes able to change the attitudes and practical behaviours of the respecting subject, being accepted at the same time as a criterion of ethical appropriateness.

In the above mentioned article, Darwall confines himself to identifying one particular kind of recognition, which he labels as "moral recognition respect" and qualifies it as follows: "some fact or feature is an appropriate object of respect if inappropriate consideration or weighting of that fact or feature would result in behaviour that is morally wrong. To respect something is thus to regard it as requiring restrictions on the moral acceptability of actions connected with it. And crucially, it is to regard such a restriction as not incidental, but as arising because of the feature or fact itself. One is not free, from a moral point of view, to act as one pleases in matters which concern something which is an appropriate object of moral recognition respect. To have such respect for the law, say, is to be disposed to regard the fact that something is the law as restricting the class of action that would be morally permissible. It is plainly this notion which we have in mind when we speak of respect for persons as a moral requirement"¹⁰.

Only in Darwall's subsequent works will the dichotomy between respect as recognition and appraisal respect leave room for a more complex articulation of the problem at issue. In the first place, he singles out a form of "differential" respect – named "respect for epistemic authority" – based on recognition of some kind of "technical competence" possessed by the respected subject. Although rooted in the acknowledgment of excellence like appraisal respect, the distinctiveness on which this form of respect hinges is not necessarily linked to moral conduct. Unlike appraisal respect, which does not necessarily affect the

⁸ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: 41-42.

⁹ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: 40.

¹⁰ See S. Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect", cit.: 40.

conduct of the respecting subject, respect for epistemic authority generally compels the latter to accept a competent person as a guide, that is, as one in possession of principles and indications which are seriously taken into account by the respecting subject herself. The authority possessed by the expert subject, at any rate, is not by itself an aspect that makes the respecting subject morally accountable towards her. For one can neglect the guiding lines of an authoritative person in a given field of action without giving rise to a morally reprehensible behaviour towards that person¹¹.

So understood, recognition of epistemic authority departs from kinds of respect which, if neglected, generate morally wrong actions. The latter are premised on the idea that the respecting subject has a moral obligation to recognise what Darwall calls the “second personal authority” of the respected subject). The subject who advances a claim to be respected owns an authority, either inborn or accorded by social agreement, that makes other individuals morally accountable towards her and normatively compelled not to disrespect her. The second personal authority is the kind of authority possessed by the individual who is legitimately entitled to be recognized as a “you”, or, better, as a human being in possession of a given status. Two different types of respect are based on second-personal recognition. The first one, which is called “respect as honour”, consists in the open acknowledgment of an authority entrenched in the structure of society, and it mostly (although not necessarily) presents an asymmetric nature, given that the honoured person is generally recognized as superior on the basis of the held social position or political role. Although a given social role might be earned through efforts and genuine desert, Darwall pictures this form of respect as exclusively linked to recognition of the position held by the honoured subject, independently of the causes that have promoted it. It is only the authority of the *respiendum, qua* holder of a specific role or position, and not some unqualified feeling of admiration stemming from recognition of excellence, that generates morally binding obligations in the respecting subject¹².

The second kind of second-personal respect to which Darwall accords a privileged status, particularly in relation to his study of liberal democratic societies, can be described as “equal recognition respect”. Such a type of respect is “symmetrical”, so to speak, and reciprocal, and it can be identified as the attitude that each individual, *qua* human being and member of the moral community, is compelled to express before each of her human fellows, regardless of their possible differences in social and political positions. The second personal authority possessed by each and every human being (as equipped with dignity as moral agent) requires that each one accepts responsibility towards other people and

¹¹ On respect for epistemic authority see S. Darwall, “Due tipi di rispetto come riconoscimento per le persone”, In I. Carter, A.E. Galeotti, V. Ottonelli (eds.), *Eguale Rispetto*, cit.: 8-9.

¹² See S. Darwall, “Due tipi di rispetto come riconoscimento per le persone”, cit.: 8.

becomes an essential, irreducible aspect of moral obligation¹³. The so called “second-person standpoint” – as Darwall calls it - is “the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another’s conduct and will”¹⁴. Viewed under this perspective, respecting people implies a mutual acknowledgment of claims and duties of respect. Membership in the moral and political community, then, brings us to rethink ourselves as parts of a whole, and as individuals potentially capable of jeopardizing the interests and welfare of our fellows.

2. Respect for moral epistemic authority (or appraisal emulative respect) in Cicero

Having laid down the main features of Darwall’s taxonomical endeavour, we might wonder whether the different types of respect outlined by him can be traced in Cicero’s philosophical works. More specifically, we can ask whether (i) such forms of respect play any role in the shaping the fundamentals of Cicero’s political writings; (ii) some pattern of respect figures more prominently than others within his arguments; (iii) the types of respect identified by Darwall can be tracked down in their “pure” form in Cicero, or if the rigid subdivision of them into specific categories leaves room for possible intersections – or even contaminations - between them. We might start answering such questions by observing that, even on a cursory reading, the notion of respect appears to present a remarkably elastic range of expressions in Cicero’s work. Any attempt to provide an accurate treatment of the issue of respect and its possible variety of expressions must be prefaced by the thought that Cicero’s political work does not meet purely speculative needs, but practical urgencies presented by an historical and cultural context in which he is actively involved¹⁵. Struggles for personal power and conflicts between social classes generate a situation of moral disorientation and a sense of progressive dissolution of aristocratic values like personal merit, responsibility and individual integrity¹⁶, which Cicero invokes as indispensable components of a well-functioning community. As he claims for instance in a well-known passage handed down by Augustin in his *City of God* (II,21):

¹³ S. Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint. Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, cit.: 11.

¹⁴ S. Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint. Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, cit.: 3.

¹⁵ Cf. L. Ferrero and N. Zorzetti (eds.), *Cicerone. Opere politiche. Lo Stato, le leggi, i doveri*, Torino, Utet, 2009 (first published 1974), introduction: 14-15.

¹⁶ On the gradual weakening of the values endorsed by the Roman *nobilitas* see G. Brizzi, *Roma. Potere e identità dalle origini alla nascita dell'impero cristiano*, Bologna, Pàtron, 2012, pp. 9-11. As he maintains, the progressive loss of the originary model of *virtus* represents one of the crucial factors that produced the crisis of the Republic.

...before our time, ancestral morality (*mos patrius*) provided outstanding men (*praestantes viros*), and great men (*excellentes viri*) preserved the morality of old and the institutions of our ancestors. But our own time, having inherited the commonwealth like a wonderful picture that had faded over time (*evanescentem vetustate*), not only has failed to renew its original colours but has not even taken the trouble to preserve at least its shape and outlines. What remains of the morals of antiquity, upon which Ennius said that the Roman state stood? We see that they are so outworn in oblivion that they are not only not cherished but are now unknown. What am I to say about the men? The morals themselves have passed away through a shortage of men; and we must not only render an account of such an evil, but in a sense we must defend ourselves like people being tried for a capital crime. It is because of our own vices, not because of some bad luck, that we preserve the commonwealth in name alone but have long ago lost its substance (*Nostris enim vitiis, non casu aliquot, rem publicam verbo retinemus, re ipsa vero iam pridem amisimus*)» (Cicero, *De Republica* V, 1-2)¹⁷.

Within such a disheartening scenery, strategies for promoting virtue of character are hailed as useful tools for the strengthening of social cohesion and a downsizing of political controversies. A specific kind of respect for persons seems to be regarded by Cicero as an attitude able to foster actualisation of the above mentioned goals: one which, being addressed to individuals endowed with outstanding intellectual virtues and/or muscular moral authority (such as many of Cicero's ancestors), invites the respecting subjects regard the respected persons as "role-models". A similar pattern of respect combines a special concern for moral conduct proper to Darwall's model of "appraisal respect" with the recognition of a specific kind of "epistemic authority": the one possessed by those who, on the basis of their outstanding behaviour, can be accepted as guides and sources of precepts by the ones who recognise their excellence/s. We might then suggest that a type of respect which stands out prominently in Cicero's works is one that we might call "respect for moral epistemic authority".

Cicero devotes remarkable attention to a description of virtuous role-models who may promote an adhesion to virtuous principles of conduct¹⁸. Notably, the Roman *res publica* and its distinctive institutions were not grounded in a written constitution, but had developed over centuries, and the most compelling source of political legitimacy was represented by tradition, that is, *mos*. This was an

¹⁷ The edition of the *De republica* (and also of the *De legibus*) I am using in this paper is J.E.G. Zetzel (ed. By), *Cicero on the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

¹⁸ On this aspect see H. Van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models. The Political Strategy of a Newcomer*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 1. As the scholar explains, appeals to the ancestors and their capacity to guide people in both private and public spheres generally held a central role in Roman republican culture and society.

unwritten, yet central part of Roman society, possibly the most successful at providing normatively binding codes of ethical behaviour. The ancestors were regarded as the “creators” of *mos*, and their collective actions and customs came to constitute what is called *mos maiorum*¹⁹. Cicero himself attempts to “build” and strengthen the authority of his virtuous predecessors, so as to make it somehow capable of affecting the ethical development of his fellow-citizens and the outcomes of the concrete life in the community. His endeavours to “inject” in their lives a sense of respect for the moral authority of virtuous people, however, should not lead us to assume that he means to endorse a passive, unreflective abidance by outstanding role-models. To the contrary, what emerges from a reading of his works is a constant encouragement to develop a sense of respect that, even when experienced and exhibited in its most reverential form, should not dispense with a critical reflection on the main grounds of moral and intellectual virtues and the goodness of their practical uses²⁰.

Cicero’s *De republica* offers a conspicuous number of cases that might be interpreted as expressions of what I have called a respect for the “moral epistemic authority” of virtuous individuals. Before looking at some of them, it should be noticed that the ideas expressed in the above mentioned work are framed by a narrative structure which, in its turn, appeals to a purely “technical” (in Darwall’s sense) epistemic authority, i.e. the one possessed by the authors adopted by Cicero as philosophical and literary role-models. The work at issue, written by Cicero between the 54 and 51 B.C., reports a discussion between some of the most authoritative intellectuals, politicians and military men of Rome who lived between 300 and 200 a.C. (among whom the well-known Publius Cornelius Scipio), whose main objects are the search for a definition of “*res publica*” and an account of the best constitution. The work has come down to us in a severely mutilated condition, and the attempt to reconstruct its original content – particularly its introductory part – has largely benefited from quotations made by ancient authors. One of them Pliny, claims in his *Naturalis Historia* that Cicero referred to the authoritative model represented by Plato’s *Republic* in the attempt to draw the structure of the writing and in the practical aims of the dialogue²¹. Respect for

¹⁹ See H. Van der Blom, *Cicero’s Role Models*, cit.: 12.

²⁰ On the idea of a “reflective”, intellectually independent loyalty to traditions being pursued by the ancient Romans cf. M. Schofield, “*Cicero’s Definition of Res Publica*”, in J.G.F. Powell (ed. by), *Cicero. The Philosopher*, Oxford, Clarendon Press (Clarendon Paperbacks, 1999), pp. 63-83: 65. For a different view (mentioned by Schofield in his essay) see M.I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, ch. 6, particularly 129-130. Finley maintains that, due to the pervasive influence of war and military discipline in the lives of the citizens of ancient Rome, «obedience to the authorities became so deeply embedded in the psyche of the ordinary roman citizen that it carried over into his explicitly political behaviour».

²¹ See Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, Praef. 22: “(Tulliana simplicitate) qui de re publica Platonis se comitem profitetur”.

the authority enjoyed by Plato as a philosophical writer is undoubtedly reflected in Cicero's methodological, literal and conceptual choices, particularly with reference to the role played by constructive inter-personal confrontation in the search for truth and practical strategies of amelioration of a heavily imperfect political reality. On the other side, Cicero's determination to select ordinary men rather than intellectuals as privileged addressees of his discussion is not affected by Plato, but follows a methodological principle stated by the writer Lucilius, as Pliny points out in his *Naturalis Historia*, praef. 7:

There is also a kind of public rejection of the learned (*quaedam publica etiam eruditorum reiectio*). Even Cicero uses it, although his genius is beyond all doubt; more surprising is that he does it through a spokesman: "and not for the very learned: I don't want Persius to read this, I do want Iunius Congus to" ("*nec doctissimis. Manium Persium haec legere nolo, Iunium Congum volo*")²².

As we see, respect for a purely technical, non-moral epistemic authority frames the context for Cicero's discussion on the best state, the best statesman and the virtues required. His main intention is that of offering an alternative way of doing philosophy, that is, one of substantial practical import, not simply confined to a sterile theoretical speculation. In making his goal explicit, Cicero does not utterly reject the authority of those philosophers who have confined themselves to writing about virtue and its role in a well-conducted political life. Nevertheless, by setting up a comparison between such people and those virtuous men who devoted themselves to practical activity, he encourages his readers to respect and follow the role-model provided by the latter, as claimed by Lactantius, an early Church Father:

They do not seek utility but pleasure from philosophy (*Non ergo utilitatem ex philosophia, sed oblectationem petunt*), as Cicero attests. In fact, although all the writings of these people contain the richest sources for virtue and knowledge, if they are compared to the actions and the accomplishment of the others I am afraid that they seem to have brought less utility to men's activities than enjoyment to their leisure (Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 3.16.5)²³.

As Cicero explains in *De republica* 1.1, if distinguished characters like Gaius Duilius, Aulus Atilius, Lucius Metellus, the two Scipios and Marcus Cato had not engaged in practical activity, preferring pleasure to virtue, they would never have accomplished deeds glorious and beneficial to society. Provided that virtue ought

²² Cicero refers to the above mentioned remark of Lucilius in his *De Oratore* 2.6 and *De Finibus bonorum et malorum* 1.3. See Zetzel's commentary to the passage: 1 footnote 4: "The text is corrupt, but it is clear that the first person named is a very learned person, while Iunius Congus is the ideal (moderately learned) audience".

²³ My translation.

to be actively used, its most prominent expression should be the governance of states. Notably, philosophers say nothing that has not been displayed by the activity of those who established laws for states. Unlike the former, the latter, by crafting laws that mirror their inner virtue and integrity, successfully promote a strengthening of ethically appropriate dispositions like justice, good faith, equity, courage, modesty and moderation, or attitudes like the avoidance of shame, and the desire for praise and honour (*De republica* 1.2).

However, by finding support in the epistemic authority of Xenocrates, whom he describes as one of the noblest thinkers (*De republica* I,3: *nobilem in primis philosophum*), Cicero recognises that some ways of doing philosophy, like the one pursued by the latter, possess a practical worth. In fact, being once asked what his pupils achieved, Xenocrates himself answered that they learned to do out of their own free will what the laws would otherwise have compelled them to do. As it seems, Xenocrates claims to be recognised by his students as an “epistemic moral authority” in virtue of the positive practical effects that his way of doing philosophy may produce on his followers. Cicero, however, does not take Xenocrates as an authority of that kind, given his belief that Xenocrates’ ability to provide ethical orientations is restricted to a small bunch of students, and it cannot therefore outshine the one of persons actively committed to public life, who manage to exert their influence over a wide multitude of citizens:

What is so remarkable about their teaching that it should outrank a state that is well established through public law and customs (*Quae est enim istorum oratio tam exquisite, quae sit anteponenda bene constitutae civitati public iure et moribus*)? For my own part, just as I think “great and powerful cities” (as Ennius calls them) better than villages and forts, so too I think that the men who lead these cities by their counsel and authority (*auctoritate*) should be considered far wiser than philosophers who have no experience at all of public life (*De republica* 1.3).

At any rate, Cicero makes available to his readers the possibility of a conflict between competing authorities: that of philosophical speculation and the one characteristic of political life. Although showing a marked preference for practical authority, he carefully avoids to take a non-negotiable stance on the issue. As he claims at *De republica* 1.12, even philosophers who never distinguished themselves for a direct involvement in politics might to some extent be regarded as performing a public function:

But anyone who is moved by the authority of philosophers (*philosophorum auctoritate moveantur*) should pay attention for a short time and listen to the ones who have the greatest authority and fame among learned men (*atque audient eos, quorum summa est auctoritas apud doctissimos homines et gloria*); I believe that even

if they did not hold office, they performed a public function (*functos esse aliquo rei publicae munere*) because they did much research and writing about government.

Once again, Cicero is careful to guide his readers towards a reflection which, rather than producing sheer persuasion, helps them to cultivate a sensitivity to the appropriateness of contexts and of the individuals involved. It is interesting that his exhortations to moral virtue are occasionally framed in terms of a search for appraisal of virtuous men that elicits an unanimous desire to imitate their behaviour. In other words, Cicero invites his fellow-citizens to develop an “emulative” kind of respect for the most outstanding expressions of moral virtue. An example of man accepted as a model of virtue is Marcus Porcius Cato. As Cicero declares in *De republica* 1.1, Cato is a an exemplar man from whom those who aspire to the same goals are dragged (*quasi exemplari ad industriam virtutemque ducimur*). Scipio himself professes a profound admiration for Cato’s virtue. Although, as he confesses, part of his devotion was due to the fact that Cato was greatly appreciated by his father, there are also critical grounds for the positive recognition he shows towards such an example of virtue:

I will tell you something that Cato said in his old age. As you know, I was deeply attached to him and admired him very greatly (*unice dilexi maximeque sum admiratus*); following the judgment of both my fathers and my own desire, I devoted myself to him completely from an early age, and I could never get enough of what he said: he had so much experience of public affairs, in which he had taken part with great distinction for a very long time, both in civil and military matters; he was so measured in speaking, mixing wit with seriousness; and he was passionately fond of both learning and teaching. His life was in complete harmony with his speaking style [...] I will therefore follow his model (*ut ille solebat*) and take my start from the origin of the Roman people; I am happy to make use of Cato’s own word (*De republica* 2.1).

It is therefore clear that the pattern of respect which he have previously called “respect for epistemic moral authority” can also be viewed in terms of an “emulative appraisal respect”, that is, a form of respect which, although maintaining the prominent aspect of the appraisal, is made compatible with a sort of activity of recognition which causes the respecting subject to take the respected individual into account and to be willingly affected by him. The addressee of appraisal respect, then, is not simply the target of a useless feeling of admiration, but becomes an inspiring model equipped with a highly pedagogical role.

Emulative appraisal respect is a recognition which virtuous men themselves desire to trigger. An meaningful example of this attitude is traceable in *De republica* 2.69, where Scipio explains that there is really one main responsibility

that he places in the charge of the good man, given that the rest are contained in this alone:

That he never cease educating and observing himself, that he summon others to imitate him (*ut ad imitationem sui vocet alios*), that through the brilliance of his mind and life he offer himself as a mirror to his fellow citizens (*vitae suae sicut speculum praebeat civibus*).

It is highly likely that Cicero himself purported to act and be recognized as an authoritative figure from a moral and epistemic point of view. His rhetorical and political strategy appeared to show a willingness to advertise himself as follower of chosen models of behaviour from the past, given the lack of an adequate ancestral backing that might have helped him to strengthen his political influence²⁴. His aim is not simply that of getting approbation for his abilities as a politician and/or professional rhetorician. Rather, he attempts to act as a guide, both in the sphere of action and in the field of learning. This is probably why at *De republica* I,13 he commits himself to an illustration of his remarkable achievements:

In such matters [i.e. public affairs, the creation of new states or the preservation of existing ones], since we have had the occasion both to achieve something memorable in directing the *res publica* and also a certain capacity for explaining the principles of civic life not only from experience but from desire to learn and to teach <...> we should be guides (<*possumus*> *auctores*)²⁵, since some earlier figures were skilled in argument but performed no public actions, while others were admirable in their deeds (*in gerendo probabiles*) but poor at exposition (*in disserendo rudes*)²⁶.

²⁴ H. Van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cit., p ix. The author explains, Cicero was an ambitious newcomer, i.e. a *homo novus*. As she points out, there is no ancient definition of the term *homo novus*, although in *De Lege Agraria* 2 Cicero opens the speech by qualifying himself as such. For a well-developed discussion of the issues revolving around the nature of such a concept (and, in particular, its difference from *nobilitas*), see 35-59.

²⁵ A different translation of “*et docendi esse <possumus> auctores*” might run as follows: “we can be guides (*auctores*) of teaching too”. Cf. the translation of the above mentioned passage by Ferrero and Zorzetti in the already cited *Cicerone*.

²⁶ Translation of this passage is mine. Zetzel translates as follows: “In such matters [i.e. public affairs, the founding of new states or the preservation of existing ones], since I have had the occasion both to achieve something memorable in my public career and to have a certain capacity for explaining the principles of civic life not only from my experience but from my desire to learn and to teach <...> I should be an authority, since some earlier figures were skilled in argument but performed no public actions, while others were admirable in their deeds but poor at exposition. In fact, the argument that I will expound is neither new nor discovered by me; instead, I will recall the memory of a discussion of the greatest and wisest men in our state of a single generation, which was described to you and me in our youth by Publius

As the passage above tells us, there are people who are regarded as worthy of appreciation (*probabilis*) in some respects, but deficient in others. Given the existence of people who incorporate a combination of talents, both theoretical and practical, it is such people that should rather be followed.

3. *Respect as honour*

Desire to earn and to preserve honour (*honos*) holds a prominent place in the ethical code of the Roman *res publica*. *Honos* can be regarded as the mark of a civic consensus that is reached on matters of ethical virtue and/or political cleverness, i.e. a consensus that finds its most eloquent expression in the bestowal of public charges to those who stand out for personal desert²⁷. In this respect, honour might be viewed as a goal which the members of the upper classes and persons eager to climb the social ladder set themselves. Such persons cultivate their sense of honour as one of the most compelling motivational sources of moral and political agency. Cicero's life itself – alongside his desire for elevation as a public speaker and as a politician – testifies to a special devotion to the pursuit of such a value. His experience as *homo novus* reveals that the latter is a good which is to be deserved and carefully nurtured by the pursuit of various kinds of virtuous activity, i.e. those which enable one to get appreciation from one's fellow-citizens. Cicero is well-aware that honour, even when well-earned and linked to recognition of excellent rhetorical and political skills, proves to be an extremely fragile good, vulnerable to the attacks of political adversaries²⁸. Preservation of the conquered honour requires a constant, tireless endeavour to act according to those standards of virtue that enable one to claim political authority. Such an authority, which – following Darwall – we might qualify as “second personal”, generates a correlated obligation in those who are called to show respect. The authority at stake is not necessarily reciprocal, especially when the respecting subject does not possess the same moral qualities and social status as the respected one. In fact, respect as

Rutilius Rugus when we were with him for several days at Smyrna; I think that nothing of any significance for these matters has been omitted”.

²⁷ See G. Brizzi, *Roma*, cit.: 9.

²⁸ On the precariousness of honour see for instance Zetzel's introduction to his edition of the *De republica* and the *De legibus*: viii. As he explains, the actions that deserved honour were often the source of a downfall even more rapid than his rise. One of the most theatrical examples of the fragility of honour is represented by Cicero's decision to execute some of Catiline's followers, who had helped him to develop conjurations plans, out of legitimate fear of armed insurrection (63B.C.). The coalition which he had created against Catiline, however, dissolved in the face of mob violence and corruption, and he was sent into exile in 58 at the instigation of the tribune Publius Clodius Pulcher – only to be recalled eighteen months later, when political circumstances changed.

honour generally obtains when the respecting subject finds herself in a condition of social – or even ontological - inferiority in relation to the respected subject/entity (except when people enjoy an equal level of honours in response to a correspondingly equal degree of personal desert or in virtue of established parity rights²⁹).

Respect as honour involves knowledge of the appropriate way of practically conducting oneself before the honoured subject, either through ritualised behaviour – as it might happen in some form of religious reverence towards specific gods – or by way of spontaneous display of regard. To show honour to someone (either a god, an abstract entity like the law or an individual) entails displaying some kind of positive assessment of two different (although related) facts: (i) that a given role is performed in the community (either the political community or, more broadly, universal nature), and (ii) that a specific entity or human individual is holding that role. The emotional dimension might cover a wide array of feelings, like some kind of awe or reverential fear, but also a (more or less developed) willingness to foster (and perhaps even preserve) the relationship with the honoured subject.

A meaningful expression of respect as honour is represented by the specific case of reverence for the gods. In the *De legibus*, a fictionalized dialogue between Cicero himself, his brother Quintus and their mutual friend Titus Pomponius Atticus, special attention is devoted to the Stoic doctrine that champions the existence of natural law. In the introductory part of a discussion on the meaning of “*lex*”, which he understands as a supreme ratio inherent in nature (*ratio summa insita in natura*; *De legibus* 1.18), Cicero explains that the human being is structurally connected to the supreme god³⁰, from which he has been generated, and that the reason with which he has been endowed forms the bond between the two ontological dimensions, i.e. the human and the divine. The human being is an animal “provident, perceptive, versatile, sharp, capable of memory, and filled with reason and judgment – which we call a human being, was endowed by the supreme god with a grand status at the time of its creation” (*De legibus* 1.22). Among all varieties of animate being, he alone has a share in reason and thought.

²⁹ An exception to this is the view of “*isotimia*” or “equal honour”. For a treatment of such a view see C. Bird, “*Status, Identity, and Respect*”, *Political Theory*, 32(2004): 207-232.

³⁰ By “supreme god” I take him to refer to the divine rationality of natural law, conceived as the ultimate, supreme ground of human beings and nature as a whole. On the relationship between “the god” and “the gods” see N. Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988, p. 71: «In referring to this commonwealth of reason to which human beings belong, Cicero ascribes its governance to both God and the gods, often in the same passage. The reason for the apparent confusion is that he shared on this point the attitude of the Stoics, who allegorized the deities of the popular Greek and roman religions. Their gods, for the Stoics, were different manifestations of the single God, the divine presence in nature». Cf. M.L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to Early Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 33-34.

Reason is a divine gift which, when matured and perfected, is properly named wisdom. Being found both in human nature and in the divine, it forms the first bond (*societas*) between man and god³¹.

Respect for the god is not for Cicero an attitude compelled (or, better, most prominently compelled) by an emotional reaction of fear. It is rather a form of honour that stems from a rational awareness of the *societas* that reason itself creates between man and god. There is no justice at all if it is not by nature. If nature does not underpin justice, all the virtues will be eliminated (*De legibus* I.42-43). Nature equips individuals not only with an inclination to reciprocal love, but also with an attitude of recognition of the gods and their power. Without the active role of nature in the human life,

not only deference to humans (*in homines obsequie*) but religious observances towards the gods will be destroyed, which I believe need to be preserved not because of fear (*non metu*) but because of the bond which exists between human and god (*ea coniunctione, quae est homini cum deo*) (*De legibus* I,43).

Reverential respect for gods, then, is not presented as an unquestioning submission to an ontologically superior power, but is mostly taken to be an experience inscribed within a complex process of intellectual understanding, the latter aiming to establish not only the fundamentals of goodness and virtue, but also and, in the ultimate analysis, human self-knowledge and awareness of one's own position within the realm of nature. Evidence of this is provided in *De legibus* I.59 ff., where Cicero suggests that only after studying the nature of all things and getting a grip on the nature and effects of what is divine and eternal (*quid divinum aeternumque sit*) will man eventually recognize himself as citizen of the whole world (*civem totius mundi*) (I,60). In the attempt to offer a picture of man as endowed with self-knowledge, he claims that

The person who knows himself will first recognize that he has something divine (*se habere sentient divinum*) and will think that his own reason (*ingenium*) within himself is a sort of consecrated image of the divine. He will always do and think things worthy of this great gift of the gods; and when he has studied and made a complete examination of himself, he will understand how he came into life fitted out by nature (*quem ad modum a natura subornatus in vitam venerit*), and what tools he has for getting and possessing wisdom, since in the beginning he formed the first sketchy conceptions of all things in his mind... (*De legibus*, 1.59).

³¹ As Zetzel points out in his commentary to this passage of *De legibus* (p. 113 of his edition, footnote 27), «[T]he emphasis on reason as the guiding principle of the universe is Stoic, as is the sharing of reason between humans and gods». Cf. *De republica* III.3-4; 33; IV.1; *De natura deorum* II.16.

Respect for the gods, alongside an authentic religious sentiment, will help human beings to free themselves from a specific form of passive, harmful respect, that is, an obsequious submission to the body, and to get an insight on our own nature:

For when the mind, through the knowledge and perception of virtue, has departed from obedience to and indulgence of the body (*corporis obsequio indulgentiaque*), and has conquered pleasure like some blot of disgrace, and has escaped all fear of death and pain, and has entered the bond of affection with his own (*societatemque caritatis coierit cum suis*) – and has recognized as his own all those who are linked with him by nature – and has taken up the worship of the gods and pure religion (*cultum deorum et puram religionem*), and has sharpened the gaze of his mind, like that of the eyes, for the selection of good things and the rejection of the opposite, the virtue which is called “prudence” from the capacity to see ahead – what can be said or thought to be more blessed than he? (*De legibus* 1.60).

The idea of a form of respect able to combine reverential feelings with a critical attitude towards its addressee is suitably expressed by the latin verb *colere*³², which originally conveys the sense of a devoted “cultivation”. The above mentioned verb is widely employed by Cicero not only with regard to a feeling of awe and appreciation for outstanding individuals and/or intimate friends endowed with virtuous inclinations (see for instance *Epistulae ad familiares* 6.20, 9.27, 13.19, 13.62; *Epistulae ad Atticum*), but also in relation to values whose pursuit is held to be worthy of a *vir bonus*, such as *amicitia* (e.g. *De legibus* 1.49; *De officiis* 1.5; *Epistulae ad familiares* 10.1), *pietas* (e.g. *De republica* 6.16; *De legibus* 2.40), *iustitia* (e.g. *De republica* 6.16; *Tusculanae Disputationes* 2.31; *De officiis* 1.5, 2.42; 3.12), *lex* (e.g. *De legibus* 2.27) and various kinds of *virtus* (e.g. *liberalitas* in *De officiis* 1.5; *fides* in *De inventione* 1.3; *pudicitia* in *In Verrem*, Actio 2, 3.6). So conceived, the attitude of respect is not automatic and irreflexive, but implies a constantly aware commitment to ideals and normative principles of conduct.

The capacity to situate oneself rightly in relation to the honoured subjects applies also to the case of the honour accorded by human beings to those fellow-humans who hold higher social and/or political positions. For instance, as Cicero claims in *De legibus* 3.5 in the context of a discussion of the role and power of the magistrate, when it comes to the appropriate attitude to be displayed before magistrates,

³² See “colo” in the Oxford Latin Dictionary.

[W]e ordain not only that people should follow and obey the magistrates (obtemperant oboediantque) but that they should cherish and love them as well (colant diligentque), as Charondas instructs in his laws³³.

As it has been suggested by Woodruff, the privileged ground in which reverential respect for persons can be expressed is the political dimension. Such a form of respect does not hinge on a form of recognition of persons as such, but finds its ground on the acknowledgment of the authority of persons in virtue of the specific role they held in the community. So understood, respect as honour constitutes a basis for the preservation of the social order, given that lack of it might degenerate into rebellions and political upheavals³⁴. The Roman political world appears strongly hierarchized and grounded in an asymmetric power structure. Its inherent order is shaped and preserved by a structured set of principles of justice (both distributive and rectificatory ones) at the basis of specific laws – the so called “*ius*”³⁵. A honour-based respect for persons is appropriately addressed when it is practised in obtemperance of a *ius* which Cicero often qualifies as “*aequabilis*”³⁶. The notion of “*aequabilitas*” interiorises the idea of a harmonious unity and uniformity of heterogeneous parts that constitute a “whole”³⁷.

The *ius aequabile*, as Cicero himself for instance points out in his *De Inventione* (I, 2), is a mark of a human coexistence which rejects brutality and moves in the

³³ In the proem to Charondas’s laws we read that it is necessary to show love for the rulers, just as one obeys his father, and whoever does not feel it will pay the gods a penalty for his “intellectual badness”.

³⁴ See P. Woodruff, *Reverence. Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001: 3, who claims that “Reverence has more to do with politics than with religion. We can easily imagine religion without reverence; we see it, for example, wherever religion leads people into aggressive war or violence. But power without reverence—that is a catastrophe for all concerned. Power without reverence is aflame with arrogance, while service without reverence is smoldering toward rebellion. Politics without reverence is blind to the general good and deaf to advice from people who are powerless”.

³⁵ In the impossibility to engage in an in-depth reflection on the notion of *ius*, its nature and possible meanings, I confine myself to suggesting (following Zetzel), that it might mean “procedures of justice”, which “can mean either the workings of a legal system (as opposed to the law itself) or the broader principles of justice (in the modern sense) that extend beyond positive law”. See footnote 29 of Zetzel’s translation at p. 113.

³⁶ For a detailed study on the notion of “*aequabilitas*” in Cicero’s thought see F. Pagnotta, *Cicerone e l’ideale dell’aequabilitas. L’eredità di un antico concetto filosofico*, Cesena, Stilgraf editrice, 2007.

³⁷ As Pagnotta (*Cicerone e l’ideale dell’aequabilitas*, cit., p. 15-66) suggests, such an ideal is shaped by reference to ancient Greek values endorsed by philosophers, cosmogonists and physicians, such as “*armonia*”, “*krasis*” and “*mixis*”, which are concerned with parts of a single human body or elements of cosmic nature.

direction of rational activity³⁸. Despite the fact that the *ius aequabile* is presented in the *De officiis* 2.41-42 as a source of laws which speak to anyone with a single voice, its universal applicability is not incompatible with the idea that a given community is constituted by individuals endowed with different natural inclinations, talents and particular interests in the city³⁹. The preservation of *aequabilitas* in conformity to the laws and the *mores* is pursued not only by that part of the *ius civile* which tries to manage the affairs and controversies of citizens (*De Oratore* 1.186-188), but also by the principle of distribution of public honours according to desert. To accord someone a political position and the corresponding “second-personal” authority amounts to addressing what Darwall would call “respect as honour”. Showing respect to someone implies not only according what is due to her on the basis of desert, but also avoiding to confer equal honours to those who do not deserve them. The latter possibility can be referred to as a form of “*iniqua aequabilitas*”; indicative examples of this phenomenon are provided in two passages of the *De Republica*. In the first one, I,43, Scipio states that *aequabilitas*, if implemented within forms of government based on the overarching power of the multitude (however moderate the individuals who constitute it might be), is itself inequitable insofar as it recognises no degrees of status (*tamen ipsa aequabilitas est iniqua, cum habet nullos gradus dignitatis*). A similar concept is confirmed in the second passage, 1.53, in which it is reported that what people call equality is in fact very unfair. When the same degree of honor is given to the best and the worst (and such must exist in any population), then equity itself is highly inequitable. An appropriate *aequabilitas*, then, can be viewed as a distribution of honours among people in relation to what is due to each and, as we might suggest on the basis of an etymological analysis of the word at issue, also as the *capacity* to treat persons in an equitable way, respecting them according to a given criterion of distribution of honours.

Having clarified some aspects of respect as honour and having identified it as a sort of obsequious, asymmetrical attitude, we might wonder whether the idea of reverence that helps to shape the model of honour remains confined within the boundaries of hierarchically structured relationships. In the last section of this paper I shall contend that the idea of *reverentia*, with its semantic complexity, presents aspects which, in my opinion, play a crucial role in the moulding of embryonic forms of respect for persons regardless of their social roles.

³⁸ Cf. also Cicero, *De inventione*, I,102, in which violent and other impious actions, being worthy of a tyrant, are described as “far from both the laws and an “*aequabile ius*”.

³⁹ Cf. F. Pagnotta, *Cicerone e l'ideale dell'aequabilitas*, cit., p. 71.

4. *Reverence and second personal authority*

It is now time to ask ourselves whether Cicero holds a proper view of equal respect for persons as moral agents. I believe that the kind of respect that individuals owe to each other lies at the heart of Cicero's idea of *res publica* as "public thing"⁴⁰. Although generally denoting a complex set of institutional forms and a hierarchical structure grounded in a centralized administrative apparatus⁴¹, the word "state" is often employed by Cicero with a view to emphasizing the "horizontal" aspect of the political community, that is, the sharing of an organized system of civic order and coexistence. In so doing, the author adheres to the common usage of his day, given that the Romans used to name the state "populus romanus", i.e. the roman people⁴². It should be said, however, that Cicero holds a less abstract notion of the *res publica*, which incorporates institutional elements, most prominently the senate and its official role⁴³. His political reflection, then, exhibits a constant intersection between two levels of respect within the political community: on the one hand, a kind of "asymmetric" respect which citizens owe to magistrates and holders of the highest offices; on the other, a recognition of the place and authority (a second-personal authority, I would say by referring to Darwall's theorisation) of citizens *qua* human beings and moral agents.

The idea of an authority enjoyed by the many seems to emerge in the first place through the definition itself of *res publica* as *res populi* at *De republica* 1.39, where the "*populus*" is not

any group of men assembled in any way, but an assemblage of some size associated with one another through agreement on law and community of interest (*omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregates, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensus et utilitatis communione sociatus*).

Following one of the most notable Stoic principles, Cicero holds that concern for the common interest seems to find its roots in inborn propensities with which

⁴⁰ These aspects are well emphasized by N. Wood, *Cicero's Social & Political Thought*, cit., in chapter 7: "The idea of the State": 120-142.

⁴¹ Cf. M.H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society. An Essay in Political Anthropology*, New York, Random House, 1967. On his account, the word "state" usefully denotes a variety of institutional forms, a hierarchical structure of power over a defined membership and a specified territory, a network recognized rules, some kind of centralized administrative apparatus and an armed force for the maintenance of internal and external security.

⁴² Cf. N. Wood, *Cicero's Social & Political Thought*, cit.: 125.

⁴³ See N. Wood, *Cicero's Social & Political Thought*, cit., p. 125. As the scholars explains, Cicero's attitudes interiorizes the principles expressed in Roman state documents, which had to bear the initials S.P.Q.R (*Senatus populusque Romanus*).

human beings have been endowed by nature⁴⁴. Such a concern might lay at the basis of an individual attitude (we might call it “recognition respect”, as Darwall does in his works) which pays careful attention not to engage in behaviour potentially harmful for the whole corpus of citizens. Recognition respect, in that sense, might be generically framed in terms of an attitude based on a form of regard for the common interest, i.e. a concern which finds expression in paths of individual agency that do not jeopardise the whole corpus of citizens.

On this perspective, recognition respect is not premised on a well-developed idea of a mutual moral obligation among the members of a political community, i.e. a duty which finds its correlate in recognition of an authority supposedly possessed by each citizen as a moral agent. Nevertheless, Cicero might hold an “embryonic” view of equal recognition respect, that is, one according to which the respecting subject, rather than being simply “invited” to engage in morally appropriate behaviour towards the respected subject, is compelled to recognise the right of the latter to vindicate redress of injustices. On my view, a first clue that might point in this direction lies in the meaning of the latin word “*res*” contained both in *res publica* and, most importantly, in the phrase “*res populi*”. As some scholars have suggested, *res* generally indicates “property”, which entails a corresponding right of possession⁴⁵. It is precisely reference to such a right that might suggest the idea of an authority possessed by people. The authority at issue might be claimed against those statesmen whose behaviour, being pursued in view of personal advantage, betrays the meaning itself of *res publica*. Neglect for public utility on the part of vicious statesmen turns into a sort of injustice for which people have the right to ask for a redress.

Common utility should not be understood as a condition that goes over and above the utility of single individuals, nor should “the people” be conceived as a collectivity that transcends each single human being. The aim of *res publica* is to preserve the interest of *each and every* member of the community, by offering both the main preconditions of social order and the material and cultural resources for a complete flourishing of the rational potential of human individuals. This is a concept on which Cicero devotes a great deal of attention in his *De officiis*. The work, written in 44BC, takes the form of a letter to his son Marcus, sent away to Athens as a pupil in Cratippus’ school. Aiming to provide ethical guide and advice, Cicero touches on fundamental topics, like justice and the nature of those

⁴⁴ Cf. his *De officiis* 1.22: *homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se aliis alii prodesse possent.* («men have begotten for men’s sake to be of service to each other»). The edition of the *De officiis* I adopt in this paper is P.G. Walsh, *Cicero. On Obligations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, from which all the other passages I mention will be taken.

⁴⁵ This point is made by N. Wood, *Cicero’s Social & Political Thought*, cit.: 125-126. See in particular 126: “Under Roman law, of course, an owner is not merely a possessor of property, but has an absolute right of property, a claim of ownership under civil law against all others”. Cf. M. Schofield, “*Cicero’s Definition of Res Publica*”, cit.: 74-76.

actions that generate normatively binding commitments, that is, the so-called *officia* (duties). Those ethically appropriate actions which give rise to norms concern human conduct in contexts of social interaction. By following some theses held by the Stoics (*De officiis* 1.6) and, in particular, those formulated by Panaetius of Rhodes (185 a.C. – 109 a.C), he dwells on the search for utility as an inborn instinct (2.11), rooted in desire for self-preservation. With the helping force of reason, nature joins individuals together, enabling them to share a commonality of language and life (2.12). The sense of community, which has a plurality of expressions like one's love for offspring or other family members, can assume a broader shape by presenting itself in terms of concern for one's fellow-citizens and for the whole *societas*, both its preservation (in *hominum societate tuenda*) and a right distribution (*tribuendoque suum cuique et rerum contractarum*) (2.15). These attitudes are constitutive ingredients of the full virtue which Aristotle identifies as the *honestum*. Alongside intellectual virtues like *sapientia* and practical ones like order and temperance, justice aims at securing the union of human beings by preventing individuals from harming each other (1.20). Although justice seems to be framed in terms of preservation of private property, the idea of legitimate reaction to an inflicted damage calls into question a wider authority: that of a moral agent who feels rightly entitled not only to ask for material compensation of the suffered harm, but also (and more generally) to demand respect of his authority to issue that specific claim of redress. In claiming that two are the kinds of injustice, i.e. one perpetrated by the author of an offence and another consisting in suffering a kind of harm without reacting against the received offense (1.23), Cicero is implicitly holding not only that those who do not respect others fail to recognize the authority of the damaged subjects, but also that those who suffer an injustice without showing any form of resentment are unaware of their possession of a moral authority or simply unwilling to exert it and advance requests for respect.

By insisting on the idea that anyone is entitled to recognition of his authority, Cicero shows deep concern about the moral equality of humans, a notion which is basic to the theory of natural law and justice endorsed by the main representatives of Stoicism⁴⁶. This is expressly revealed in *De officiis* 1.99, where he claims that respect is equally owed to people independently of their social status or lack of excellence. As he explains with reference to the idea of *decorum* as appropriate virtuous conduct, *iustitia* qualifies a negative respect that bears on the prevention of concrete, tangible damages but, taken by itself, it is not an attitude that protects persons as such, in their dignity as human beings. *Reverentia*, although being tightly linked to justice and expressing like the latter a negative form of respect, seems to show a more prominent concern for the

⁴⁶ Cf. N. Wood, *Cicero's Social & Political Thought*, cit.: 90.

vulnerability of human beings and their right to see both their public image and their plans of life well-preserved:

We should [accordingly] treat other people – not just the best of them, but also the rest – with a modicum of respect (*adhibenda est [igitur] quaedam reverentia*). Disregard for what others feel about you is a mark not merely of conceit but also of lack of integrity (*neglegere quid de se quisque sentiat, non solum arrogantis est sed etiam omnino dissoluti*). Mind you, there is a difference between justice (*iustitiam*) and deference (*verecundiam*) when taking stock of other people. It is the role of justice not to wrong them, but of deference to avoid bruising them; the impact on the fitting is especially notable here (*iustitiae partes sunt non violare homines, verecundiae non offendere, in quo maxime vis perspicitur decori*).

It is interesting that equal respect is framed here in terms of *reverential honour*, that is, a form of respect which is generally viewed as asymmetrical⁴⁷. Why should Cicero employ such a concept to account for a kind of respect that aims to neglect hierarchical human relationships? I believe that at least two are the aspects of *reverentia* that might serve Cicero's cause. In the first place, to show reverence involves a kind of strategic fear, that causes one to calibrate one's conduct in given social interactions and to avoid giving offense. In this respect, reverence shows significant aspects of analogy with the roman ideal of *verecundia*⁴⁸, an attitude of restraint and deference generally displayed by people of socially inferior status towards persons endowed with higher honours. I believe that, in the context of equal respect, *reverentia* retains an aspect of restraint that would appear immediately understandable if applied by inferior people committed to asymmetrical human relationships. A basis of "reverence" for each and every human being, being independent on recognition of social roles, presupposes awareness of the risk of invading the freedom and the property of other human beings. In order to produce justice, restraint before others and fear of invading others' spaces should be mutual.

A second aspect which *reverentia* seems to exhibit is the idea of "bowing" towards the object of respect, that is, an attitude of submission which is typical of those disposed to renounce an apparent personal utility⁴⁹ in view of the utility and well-being of the object of respect. We might wonder whether the idea of subservience fits properly with a pattern of respect which utterly rules out social

⁴⁷ This aspect is well-emphasized in the already mentioned book by R. Mordacci, *Rispetto*.

⁴⁸ On the ideal of *verecundia* see R.A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, particularly 14-15.

⁴⁹ In Book III of the *De officiis* Cicero devotes a great deal of effort in showing that individual utility is the same as collective utility, and that the perception of a conflict between the two is fallacious. In that case, individual utility, if presented as incompatible with justice and collective utility, on closer inspection reveals itself as a mere "appearance of utility".

disparities. Remarkably enough, the idea of subservient attitude is often used by Cicero to indicate a positively moderate behaviour, which is the opposite of arrogance. For instance, in *De officiis* 1.90 he speaks about Philip, the king of Macedon, in terms of a man who, although surpassed by his son in achievements and in fame, was superior in affability and humanity (*facilitate et humanitatem*). As Cicero goes on,

...which underlines the apparent truth of the advice of those who say that the more exalted we are, the more humble should be our behaviour (*quanto superiores simus, tanto nos geramus summissius*).

The language of “submission” reappears in *De officiis* 1.102, in which Cicero speaks of human appetites that need to be restrained and tranquillized in accordance with reason. When these go beyond the appropriate measures, they

renounce and reject obedience and do not submit to reason, to which they are subject (*suiecti*) by the law of nature.

As emerges from the above mentioned passages, Cicero holds an idea of submission (either voluntary or involuntary) which does not necessarily involve injustice. On the contrary, on occasions like those just underscored, submission seems to restore the natural order of things. One’s submission towards one’s fellows does not imply one’s perception of oneself as inferior from the standpoint of moral agency. It rather presupposes a willingness to act in such a way to prevent others from being considered (and also from considering themselves) as inferior individuals.

Treating persons with equal reverence, then, will amount to treating them with a concern that is generally reserved for the most socially elevated people. Those holding a subordinated social position, when regarded as the addressees of respect, will get a recognition and heed that they would not receive on the basis of their own social status. On the other hand, those showing *reverentia* will refuse to adopt overpowering attitudes towards their fellows, and the form of submission enclosed in such an attitude will not appear as a degrading one. Viewed under this light, reverence can be adopted as an appropriate criterion of virtuous conduct that each and every human being should apply in relation to his fellow-humans. Mutual reverence among persons enables individuals to treat others and be treated in their turn according to their worth as human beings: a worth that deserves a full, spontaneous recognition.

The conceptual intersections between reverence and respect for persons sketched out above represent substantial evidence of the idea that the kinds of respect elaborated by Darwall not only make their appearance in Cicero’s works, but prove able to reciprocally interlace and give rise to more complex forms of

respect. Equal respect, although being grounded in reciprocity of duties, is modelled after the pattern of an asymmetrical honour respect, i.e. the respect which is generally due to people situated in the topmost positions in the social and/or political hierarchy. Even though the idea of a “second-personal authority” possessed by moral agents does not seem to be fully developed by Cicero, we might establish an analogy between his view of equal respect for persons and Darwall’s original idea of a recognition respect that causes the respecting subjects to give the respected ones the proper weight in deliberations about how to act. Conceived in this way, recognition respect turns into a general moral duty, that is, one which is not necessarily premised on a crystal-clear view of the addressees of respect as morally authoritative individual subjects. What the pattern of equal respect as reverence can suggest is simply that each individual is to be respected “as if” each possessed an authority distinctively linked to his or her social position; this, at any rate, does not amount to admitting that persons deserve respect as individuals equipped with features universally shared by their fellow humans.

The intimate, reciprocal shaping between honour and equal respect constitutes just one of the many possible conceptual intersections articulated by Cicero in his works. As we have already seen, even the model of appraisal respect is based on the interiorization of attitudinal patterns such as respect as emulation and recognition of one’s epistemic authority. Both forms of interaction presuppose that the figures of respect not only do not preserve their conceptual purity in Cicero’s works, but they successfully manage to mould new spheres of meaning within a moral and political dimension.