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**APOLOGIES AND FORGIVENESS: NORMATIVE VERBAL GESTURE
FUNCTIONALITY IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

BY

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An honors senior thesis submitted as a final project for the undergraduate Humanities Honors
Program at the University of California, Irvine.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I take apologies to be widely used, normative verbal gestures of society. After defining the term, I analyze acts of apology externally by paying particular attention to their role in relational repair. I establish determinants of genuineness to measure said repair while examining the respective expectations of the participants. Having extensively discussed apologies, I also place emphasis on the functionality of forgiveness. I focus on attitude changes in response to resentment, once again considering the value of sincerity in verbal gesture effectiveness. I proceed to explain the grounding of apology and forgiveness in empathy, highlighting the importance of mutual understanding in reconciliation. Through this internal analysis of both acts, I reveal the essentiality of empathy in their execution. I conclude by exploring apologies and forgiveness as enablers of friendship. I reference empathy to demonstrate how its facilitation of verbal gestures makes the cherished social relationship between friends possible.

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The primary purpose of this thesis is to reveal both the inner and outer workings of apologies and forgiveness, verbal gestures typically viewed broadly in the context of relational repair. I intend to enlighten the reader with examples that substantiate the more complex processes involved in apologizing and forgiving. All too often are the valuable constituents and products of verbal interactions overlooked during their exchange. It is through my exhaustive presentation of apologies and forgiveness that I hope to ignite a greater appreciation for conventional utterances and their bases.

My intent to communicate this appreciation has unfolded during my final year of undergraduate study at the University of California, Irvine. The thesis writing process during these months would not have been as straightforward if not for the support of a few individuals. I would first like to thank my advisor Professor David Woodruff Smith for introducing me to the fascinating study of social ontology and providing me with invaluable guidance. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Nancy McLoughlin for overseeing my project and always encouraging more careful analysis. I would also like to thank my former teaching assistant Steven Norris for directing me to multiple indispensable sources. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for teaching me the love of learning.

I. APOLOGIES

It can be argued that apologies lie at the forefront of the often-lengthy process of making amends. When a relationship is disrupted by loss of trust or other breach of social agreement, the wronged party generally expects an apology from the perpetrator. Though this expectation may not always be met, its existence implies that apologies hold value in society. When considering social relations and day-to-day human interaction, it is rather easy to pinpoint the workings of an apology. Or rather, how exactly the verbal gesture was made and received. But it is interesting to explore beyond this and comprehend the *intent* of apologies in the context of their exchange between individuals.

Before discussing the functionality of apologies in detail, it is important to thoroughly define the term “apology.” Or, more specifically, to understand what really constitutes one. Luc Bovens categorizes the practice of apologizing as a “social lubricant.”¹ A social lubricant refers to an action or interaction for minimizing tension between people. Consider an individual Mark and his close friend Peter. Mark is accustomed to trusting Peter, so he trusts him with a secret. He later finds out Peter told their mutual friends the secret. A subsequent bitterness on Mark’s part ensues. Under such circumstances, it is normal to expect that Mark and Peter’s friendship is temporarily weakened.

In using the verb “weakened,” I do not mean to imply that Mark and Peter’s closeness is in any way compromised. Instead, I am referring to a temporary weakness or disruption in the amicable nature of their friendship. Taking this status as standard, we assume that generally, Mark feels comfortable trusting Peter with his secrets. There exists an agreeable relationship

¹ Luc Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (Hardback)*, 2008, 219.

between the men that allows for this reliability. When Mark expects Peter to keep his secrets, and this expectation is not fulfilled, we can say that Peter has wronged Mark. As a result of this wronging, their otherwise harmonious relationship becomes temporarily dissonant. For the sake of this example, we can assume that this is the first time Peter has ever wronged Mark. Therefore, Mark and Peter's friendship experiences an unforeseen change. Their relationship as friends remains, but is interrupted. It is normal to suppose that this interruption will progress to some form of tension.

There appear to be two options for relieving the tension between Mark and Peter, though only one truly fits the dictionary definition of "relief." The unfitting choice is as follows: Mark has the option to relieve himself of the tension, independently of Peter, by removing himself from the situation. In this case, Mark is not attempting to save the friendship. He is not expecting nor pursuing any action that will restore the amicable nature of his relationship with Peter. In this situation, the tension is more eradicated than *relieved*. If after removing himself from the situation, Mark were to attempt to contact Peter and restore the friendship, the problem of mistrust would remain. Even supposing Mark forgot about the incident, his rekindling would not solve the past issue of Peter disclosing his secret to their mutual friends. Mark may feel that his friendship with Peter is amicable, but it does not follow that the secret disclosure incident was ever truly *resolved*.

The more common option to relieve tension involves social interaction, traditionally in the form of verbal or written communication. In cases of weakened relationships like that of Mark and Peter, we expect this social interaction to involve an apology. Keep in mind that after learning about the disclosure of his secret, Mark may not display his dissatisfaction. But if he chooses to do so, and both individuals engage in an attempt to relieve the tension, Peter should

apologize. If he does so, ideally, they will be able to restore their friendship to its previous stable state. Peter's apology will serve as the "social lubricant" in minimizing the recently developed tension between him and Mark. It is important to note that this presented process of apology is radically simplified in an effort to convey *how* apologies function rather than *if* they function. In the case that Mark does not accept the apology, is the friendship remedied? What if Peter does not truly intend to make peace with Mark and simply pretends to be regretful? These are questions to be answered.

Having established what an apology really is, it is crucial to also understand what constitutes a *genuine* apology. It is relatively simple to utter words of remorse, but the sincerity of those words affects their delivery and acceptance. Bovens characterizes a genuine apology by presenting four components that concisely define the act. These components are cognitive, affective, conative, and attitudinal.² It is important to consider these characterizations of a genuine apology within the discussion of relational repair, for it may alter our opinion of the necessity of apologies.

The cognitive component of a genuine apology addresses the degree of proper recognition of a wrongdoing.³ This degree of proper recognition is gleaned from the actions of the offending party. If the actions of the wronging party do not coincide with the alleged intent of the given apology, can we assume that the apology is genuine? A sincere apology requires such coincidence. An apology can very well be labeled ingenuine if the offending party's actions are not consistent with their supposed intent to make peace. I take the example of Mark and Peter to illustrate the cognitive component at work. Say Peter apologizes to Mark for disclosing his secret

² Bovens, "XII-Apologies," 220.

³ Bovens, "XII-Apologies," 221.

to others. But after doing so, he continues to talk to their mutual friends about the content of that secret, belittling Mark and ridiculing him. Whether or not Mark is present during these discussions does not change their discreditation of Peter's apology. When hearing the apology, Mark could assume that Peter's intent was to show remorse for his mistake and ultimately make peace with him. He could assume that Peter did indeed feel wrong for having disclosed his secret to their mutual friends, and that he would attempt to not repeat his mistake. If after making such an apology, Peter acted conversely in relation to Mark's understanding of his apology's intent, the verbal gesture's sincerity could be nullified.

The affective component of a genuine apology concerns the implicit degree of remorse shown in an apology.⁴ Offending parties who seek more opportunistic goals may apologize just to secure attainment of those goals. Bovens writes that such parties are "motivated by expediency."⁵ In other words, an individual may apologize only because he realizes the apology will provide him with benefits other than "making peace" with the offended party. In the example of Mark and Peter, imagine that Mark is assisting Peter in finding a job. Since Mark considers Peter a close friend, he tells a relative in Peter's field of work that he would be a good candidate for a new position. A week after Mark recommends Peter to his relative, he tells Peter the secret which is later disclosed to their mutual friends. When Peter learns of Mark's disappointment following the incident, initially he is not compelled to apologize. But he realizes that if he does not show any remorse regarding his wrongdoing, Mark may inform the relative that Peter is no longer a good fit for the aforementioned job. To ensure continuation of his

⁴ Bovens, "XII-Apologies," 225.

⁵ Bovens, "XII-Apologies," 226.

candidacy, Peter apologizes to Mark (albeit insincerely) in order to restore their friendship, and in turn his reputation for the position.

The conative component of a genuine apology addresses the willingness of the offending party to act in accordance with the intent of the verbal gesture.⁶ Like the cognitive component, the conative component focuses on this following of intent. However, unlike the first component, it emphasizes the display of will and drive within this following. The wronging party must show a “willingness to change its ways” if his apology is to be interpreted as genuine.⁷ In the case of Mark and Peter, Peter’s apology to Mark would not be enough to satisfy conditions of sincerity unless it were accompanied by actions to correct his mistake. For example, Peter could attempt to reestablish himself as a trustworthy individual by explaining to his and Mark’s mutual friends that his disclosure of the secret was inappropriate and unacceptable. He could also ensure that he earn Mark’s trust by consistently keeping secrets after his first expression of remorse. Without explicit execution of actions that display Peter’s willingness to change, his apology could be labeled ingenuine.

The attitudinal component of a genuine apology concerns a more personal aspect of making peace when determining sincerity.⁸ According to Bovens, “we expect an apology to be accompanied by an attitude of humility.”⁹ When delivering an apology, the offending party must present himself in a way that communicates modesty rather than arrogance. This expectation exists in an effort to guarantee some respect for the offended party during reception of the apology. In the example of Mark and Peter, suppose Peter agrees to apologize to Mark for

⁶ Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” 228.

⁷ Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” 229.

⁸ Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” 230.

⁹ Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” 230.

disclosing his secret. However, during the apology, Peter acts rather taunting. He mutters the words “I am sorry,” but teases Mark for being uncomfortable with his disclosure of the secret. In this situation, Mark does not feel that Peter has presented the apology in a manner which communicates humility. On the contrary, he has only further proven that has no respect for Mark and his private life. As a result, the apology loses some or all of its legitimacy.

Having established the features of a genuine apology, it is also important to analyze the function of the verbal gesture in conjunction with its acceptance. Let us assume that Peter’s apology to Mark is genuine and he truly feels remorse for having disclosed his secret. If Mark does not accept the apology, how will this impact his relationship with Peter? Is some tension alleviated even though the expected process of Peter apologizing and Mark accepting has only reached its halfway point? The uncertainty of receiving acceptance affects the degree of reparation. However, note that it does not impact the degree of reparation *offered*. In our example, Peter may very well intend to make amends with Mark. Assuming that Peter’s apology is genuine, Mark’s decision whether or not to accept it will be the deciding factor for weighing reparation. Peter is helpless in terms of determining acceptance. Of course, the appropriateness of accepting an apology depends on both the level of wrongdoing done and the willingness of the wronged individual to repair his weakened relationship. It also depends on the wronged person’s estimation of the apology’s genuineness. In this opening chapter, I have presented Peter’s apology as genuine to simplify the situation and acquaint the reader with the many variables involved in apologizing. Situations involving uncertainty about the sincerity of Peter’s apology would prompt us to also consider Mark’s beliefs about Peter’s intentions.

The status of an apology’s acceptance indubitably affects the relationship it seeks to repair. But before analyzing these effects, it is important to understand why wronged parties could be

inclined to reject apologies. Bovens argues that there are two situations in which a person may not accept an apology.¹⁰ The first is when a wronged individual simply believes that there is no need for an apology. There are two potential cases where a victim could think that an apology is unnecessary. In the first of these cases, the wronged individual does not believe the level of wrongdoing is serious enough to require an apology. He does not see the wrongdoer's actions as particularly afflicting. In the situation of Mark and Peter, let us assume that Mark does not consider Peter's disclosure of his secret as serious or damaging. Perhaps Mark believes disclosing a secret is a miniscule mistake, something to be expected and forgiven. In this theoretical situation, Mark does not feel nor show his disappointment regarding the incident. But Peter believes he has wronged his friend and attempts to apologize. Since Mark does not view the disclosure as serious, when Peter communicates his guilt, he informs him that the apology is unnecessary. In this situation, it could be argued that the wrongdoer is automatically released from the apology and no longer needs to carry out the obligation of formally displaying remorse. The weakened relationship is thus repaired rather straightforwardly.

The second case in which the victim considers an apology to be unnecessary is one where he feels so severely wronged by the perpetrator that nothing appears to be sufficient for reparation. In the example of Mark and Peter, suppose that the secret Peter disclosed was so important to Mark that its announcement to their mutual friends tarnished his reputation. Because of the act's seriousness and consequent impact, Mark does not believe he can ever consider Peter a friend again. In fact, Mark has no intent to keep Peter as an acquaintance or associate with him. He prefers to terminate all contact. In this given case, Mark views the apology as unnecessary because no amount of expressed remorse will convince him to repair his relationship with Peter.

¹⁰ Bovens, "XII-Apologies," 235.

Therefore, any effort shown by Peter to confront Mark and restore their friendship is automatically considered futile.

A second situation in which a person may not accept an apology is one where the wronged individual thinks that the apology is not genuine. This situation is predominantly based on suspicion. However, it may be supported if the wronged individual observes the absence of the previously explained components of a genuine apology. We established that the conative component of a sincere apology “considers the willingness of the offending party to act in accordance with the intent of the verbal gesture.” I provided an example of the conative component in effect as follows: “say Peter apologizes to Mark for disclosing his secret to others. But he continues to talk to their mutual friends about the content of that secret, belittling Mark and ridiculing him.” This situation assumes the insincerity of the apology after the fact. However, it can also be utilized to gauge the genuineness of an apology before it is presented. Suppose that Peter discloses Mark’s secret and Mark becomes aware of the disclosure shortly after. In the following weeks, he observes Peter openly ridiculing him. On one day of such ridicule, Peter apologizes to Mark for telling their mutual friends his secret. But Mark is unwilling to accept the apology. Based on his recent observation of Peter’s behavior, Mark arrives at the conclusion that his apology cannot be genuine. This induction can be followed from scrutinizing the affective, conative, and attitudinal components in a similar fashion.

What if the wronged individual accepts the wrongdoer’s apology but without the intention of restoring their previous relationship? This is indeed possible, for acceptance of an apology does not necessarily commit the accepter to wanting restoration. Bovens provides the example of a female date rape victim who is assaulted by a friend to illustrate this point. Following the date rape incident, the woman “accepts an apology for the offender who once was a trusted

friend...[however], the last thing she might want to do is go back to the way things once were.”¹¹

In this situation, the victim is accepting the apology as a formality. She does not want to continue her friendship with the perpetrator but acknowledges his verbal gesture. Though his apology will not repair their relationship, the man’s remorse can provide them both with individual alleviation. For him, an explicit acknowledgement of his mistake and the motivation to change. For her, recognition of her perpetrator’s said acknowledgement. It is likely their friendship will never be restored, but his apology is able to serve some formal purpose.

In arguing that the perpetrator will experience “acknowledgement of his mistake and a promise to change,” I consider his apology to be genuine. I also consider the wronged party to think the same. If the female date rape victim did not think her (former) friend’s remorse was indeed sincere, there might be no incentive to accept his apology. In this example, the victim has absolutely *no intention* to repair the relationship. As stated, if she was aware of the apology’s genuineness, she would accept it as a formality. If she was aware of its insincerity, she could either accept or reject. Accepting the ingenuine apology would not provide individual alleviation, for it would prevent facilitation of the aforementioned fulfilling experiences for both parties. The apology exchange would still allow for a somewhat loose formality, but would not provide any real recognition of the perpetrator’s wrongdoing. Rejecting the ingenuine apology would avoid both individual alleviation and false overall recognition. Supposing the victim sought the formality of a true apology, rejecting the ingenuine apology could be more beneficial than accepting the ingenuine apology. Rejection would yield a more concrete result – one free from the awareness of insincerity and fabricated acknowledgement.

¹¹ Bovens, “XII-Apologies,” 232-233.

In the situation of Mark and Peter, assume that Mark truly desires to repair his relationship with Peter. Peter apologizes to Mark for disclosing his secret to their mutual friends and waits for his response. For the purposes of this example, let us accept that Mark can understand whether or not Peter’s remorse is sincere. Assuming this, Mark has a few different options when thinking of how to proceed. Each option will either facilitate or prevent relational repair to varying degrees. The table below displays the outcome of each option with regard to these degrees.

Figure 1.1 - Relational Repair Strength (Mark and Peter)

Assume:

- Mark’s *only* desire is to repair his relationship with Peter.
- Mark is able to understand if Peter’s apology is genuine or ingenuine.
- Mark does not believe that ingenuine apologies have the power to repair.

Genuine Apology	Ingenuine Apology
Accepted with intention to repair (strongest)	Accepted with intention to repair (weak)
Accepted with no intention to repair (N/A)	Accepted with no intention to repair (N/A)
Rejected with intention to repair (weakest)	Rejected with intention to repair (strong)
Rejected with no intention to repair (N/A)	Rejected with no intention to repair (N/A)

The table corresponding to the date rape victim situation would be as follows:

Figure 1.2 – Relational Repair Strength (Date Rape Victim)

Assume:

- The victim’s *only* desire is to accept the apology as a formality.
- The victim does not desire to repair the relationship.
- Victim is not averse to ingenuine apologies but finds genuine apologies to be more effective.

Genuine Apology	Ingenuine Apology
Accepted with intention to repair (N/A)	Accepted with intention to repair (N/A)
Accepted with no intention to repair (strongest)	Accepted with no intention to repair (fair)
Rejected with intention to repair (N/A)	Rejected with intention to repair (N/A)
Rejected with no intention to repair (weak)	Rejected with no intention to repair (strong)

In the examples I have presented up until this point, situations involving apologies considered three main variables. The first: genuineness. I have discussed in detail how the genuineness of an apology impacts its legitimacy and probability of facilitating reconciliation.

The second: intent. I have explained how apologies need not always intend to repair. Third: acceptance. The victim who receives an apology may or may not accept it. Acceptance of apologies is important because (assuming genuineness on the part of both the perpetrator and the victim) it allows for “completion” of the apology process. I define the apology process as follows: a situation in which a perpetrator wrongs a victim, both seek to repair their weakened relationship, and the perpetrator’s apology is met with acknowledgement and acceptance by the victim.

For the purposes of clarity in this section, assume that from now on there exist no doubts concerning the genuineness of both apologies *and* acceptance of those apologies. Furthermore, maintain that the perpetrator always seeks to repair the weakened relationship. Taking this into consideration, it is important to understand how exactly acceptances alter situations involving apologies. When a perpetrator displays feelings of remorse to a victim, he has *attempted* to repair their weakened relationship. This attempt, however, does not achieve the desired repair without appropriate action from the victim.

Consider yet again the example of Mark and Peter. Say Peter apologizes to Mark for disclosing his secret and Mark is yet to accept the apology. Peter’s verbal gesture can then be said to have completed only half of the apology process, if we consider it to be circular. It is incorrect to say that the apology serves no purpose if the victim does not act on its receipt, but proper relational repair does have this requirement. Knowing this, if Mark does not explicitly acknowledge Peter’s verbal gesture, there can be no expectation of fulfilling repair. But say Mark does indeed accept Peter’s apology. In that scenario, he displays a willingness to participate in the apology process. His acceptance communicates understanding, recognition, and

reciprocation of Peter's initial intent to repair. With this response, the circular process is complete and allows for full restoration of the men's previously stable friendship.

Acceptance undoubtedly facilitates the completion of the apology process, but the action is rather gradable. Semantically, certain utterances carry more "intent weight" than others. Intent weight refers to the actual eagerness of a party (in this discussion, the victim's) to follow through with the apology process and repair the weakened relationship. Put simply, it can be defined as enthusiasm for repair. Enthusiasm in verbal gesture exchanges, or in any given situation, is not a binary quality. As will be shown, there are varying degrees of enthusiasm in cases where victim acceptance is expected. These varying degrees, like genuineness in apologies, affect the legitimacy and success of the apology process.

Assume that in the example of Mark and Peter, Peter has already apologized to Mark for disclosing his secret. In turn, Mark tells Peter "it's alright." This utterance undoubtedly conveys acceptance. But at the same time, it is quite limited. In a semantic context, "alright" itself is not a very weighted word. In most cases, it is an expression of passive receipt. If one were to use the word "alright" when providing a review of an establishment, others would understand it as being average, at best. Similarly, if a friend were to suggest to another that they have dinner and the other replied with "alright," his enthusiasm for the event would be considered relatively mediocre. Following from this, if Mark were to tell Peter "it's alright" in response to his apology, Peter would certainly recognize Mark's willingness to repair their weakened relationship. However, he would not necessarily discern any true *enthusiasm* to do so.

Passive acceptance takes many forms in the English language. It is not uncommon to hear "it's alright," "it's okay," "it's fine," "it's no problem," and "no worries" in response to an apology. These acknowledgements are commonplace in casual social interactions. If a

perpetrator's mistake is deemed trivial, passive acceptance utterances could indeed suffice for a halfhearted completion of the apology process. But this is not true for more serious offenses such as that which we have analyzed in the example of Mark and Peter. Passive utterances of receipt, though they imply acceptance, are generally *not* considered capable of fulfilling repair in more pressing cases of the apology process.

If acceptance is typically inadequate for true fulfillment of a verbal gesture exchange, then how is the apology process ever really completed? In the following chapter I argue that this completion is made possible by forgiveness. While acceptance contributes partially to meaningful apology processes, forgiveness facilitates a more concrete restoration of former relationship statuses. This is because forgiveness makes evident *explicit* acknowledgement of the perpetrator's mistake and intent to repair. It allows for completion of the apology process by matching the apologizer's level of enthusiasm for reconciliation. In short, the act of forgiveness is more powerful than that of acceptance. It is for this very reason that it is essential to our discussion of apologies.

II. FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness can be defined as the intentional process by which a wronged person changes his attitude regarding an offense. The key word in this definition is a derivative of the word *intent*. Intention is necessary for effective execution of forgiveness – for it is what establishes the wronged party’s true willingness to participate in relational repair. But intent is not sufficient for a working act of forgiveness. The quality must also be explicitly expressed and understood. Pamela Hieronymi argues that successful acts of forgiveness are those that “articulate the revision in judgement or change in view that allows us to overcome our anger or resentment without compromise.”¹² In other words, victims must make evident their intention to move past the incident that has weakened their relationship. Efficacious forgiveness entails clarity, communication, and understanding. The absence of such qualities renders an act of forgiveness useless.

As established in the first chapter, the genuineness of apologies is dictated by certain components. These components ultimately establish if the perpetrator’s apology is sincere. There are similar determinants for acts of forgiveness. Hieronymi claims that “any account of genuine forgiveness must articulate the revision in judgement or change in view in a way that allows the forgiver to hold fixed the following three (interrelated) judgements: (1) The act in question was wrong; it was a serious offense, worthy of moral attention. (2) The wrongdoer is a legitimate member of the moral community who can be expected not to do such things. As such, she is someone to be held responsible and she is worth being upset by. (3) You, as the one wronged,

¹² Pamela Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 2001, 531.

ought not to be wronged. This sort of treatment stands as an offense to your person.”¹³ All three judgements are necessary to maintain in order to ensure a genuine act of forgiveness. Omitting even one would “absolve the wrongdoer of culpability, and to absolve of culpability is to excuse, not to forgive.”¹⁴ Such “excusing” is unsatisfactory in the apology process because it alters the participants’ expectations of the affair. Let us apply the aforementioned judgements to hypothetical cases of the apology process to reveal why excusing does not equate to forgiving.

First, it is necessary to reveal why judgement 1 is essential to the genuineness of an apology. Judgement 1 states that “the act in question was wrong; it was a serious offense, worthy of moral attention.” Suppose Sheila and Patsy are close friends. Their friendship is typical, and not turbulent by any means. Sheila is on her way to Patsy’s house to watch a movie, but after leaving she realizes that she will arrive about 10 minutes later than the time she agreed to be at Patsy’s house. After arriving, Sheila apologizes to Patsy for the delay with a simple exclamation. Patsy responds by expressing her forgiveness. In this situation, Patsy’s act of forgiveness could easily be considered unnecessary. Sheila’s delay in arriving at Patsy’s house is not remotely morally wrongful. It cannot be characterized as a “serious offense,” for it does not have dire consequences. Perhaps the worst upshot of the incident would be Sheila and Patsy missing the last 10 minutes of their movie. Thus Patsy, in forgiving Sheila for the delay, cannot be expressing *genuine* forgiveness. Such expression would require Sheila’s offense to be more significant and wrongful.

Following from this, it is easy to see how judgement 1 can fabricate an insincere act of forgiveness. In contrast to the earlier example, imagine a situation in which Sheila truly wrongs

¹³ Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 530.

¹⁴ Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 530.

Patsy. After the incident, Sheila apologizes to Patsy. In response to Sheila's apology, Patsy informs her that she should not worry about the incident. However, she feels wronged and upset by her friend's mistrust. In such a case, Hieronymi states that comments such as "look, these things happen all the time" or "do not worry about it" are excellent examples that reveal the need for judgement 1.¹⁵ In uttering such phrases, the victim abandons the "worthy of moral attention" component of the judgement, not acknowledging the seriousness of the offense. In our example, Patsy's utterance essentially excuses Sheila for the wrongdoing and "gives up" on resolving the problem. Patsy provides an *inarticulate* account of forgiveness that lacks proper recognition of the offense. As a result, the act is considered ingenuine.

Judgement 2 states that "the wrongdoer is a legitimate member of the moral community who can be expected not to do such things. As such, she is someone to be held responsible and she is worth being upset by." For application of this judgement, consider an individual Robert. Robert has a criminal record and known history of theft in his community. Sheila befriends Robert, aware of his behavior and reputation. When Sheila goes on vacation, she asks Robert to housesit for her. Though she realizes he is not trustworthy, she proceeds to request he watch her belongings. Upon returning home, Sheila notices that her television and radio are missing. She confronts Robert, and he confesses to and apologizes for stealing both valuables. In this situation, if Sheila were to forgive Robert, the act would be insincere. This is because Sheila had no reason to believe that Robert would act morally in her absence. When asking him to housesit, she was completely aware of the possibility of him stealing her belongings. In fact, she knew it was highly likely. Until Robert is able to separate himself from his reputation, there is no instance where he can receive reciprocation in the apology process. Why? Forgiveness implies

¹⁵ Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," 531.

that a perpetrator is in good standing within his community. When an individual is forgiven, they are relieved of their erroneous behavior. If a person does not begin with good standing amongst others, there is no room for relief. There is no realistic hope for possibility of change in the foreseeable future, and thus forgiveness appears impossible. It is important to remember that judgement 2 in the discussion of Robert and Sheila was applied to an extreme situation that sounds both improbable and unrealistic. Forgiveness is definitely possible for those with imperfect reputations, but is presented here as unfeasible for Robert in order to explicitly highlight the function of judgement 2.

Like judgement 1, judgement 2 can also be used to present insincere expressions of forgiveness. Assume that after Robert apologizes to Sheila, she forgives him because she initially knew there was a good possibility he would steal her valuables. She does so by following the thought that she “cannot expect any better of him.”¹⁶ In this situation, she is doing what Hieronymi calls “adjusting her expectations” of Robert.¹⁷ Upon meeting him and agreeing to have him housesit, Sheila was fully aware that Robert was not a trustworthy friend. But regardless of this expectation, his stealing of her belongings is still a serious offense. When Sheila “forgives” Robert for the incident because she expects no better of him, she is not exercising true forgiveness. Rather, she is allowing him to maintain the reputation he has already established. This permissance excuses Robert for his behavior. Sheila’s act of forgiveness is ingenuine because it does not properly address Robert’s responsibility. It is thus insufficient for pairing with an apology.

¹⁶ Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 531.

¹⁷ Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 531.

Judgement 3 states that “you, as the one wronged, ought not to be wronged. This sort of treatment stands as an offense to your person.” Judgement 3, rather than legitimizing forgiveness for individuals who *deserve* to be wronged, simply states a fact. In order for forgiveness to be genuine, it is necessary to recognize the importance of the individual. More specifically, one’s moral right to live in peace. It is with such a standard that individuals are able to forgive others. Disruptions of peace and amicable relationships are made evident by apologies, and in turn expressions of forgiveness. If we considered individuals worthy of being wronged, forgiveness would be useless. The expectation of perpetrators to not repeat their mistakes is what makes genuine forgiveness possible.

Judgement 3 can demonstrate insincere accounts of forgiveness on a more personal level. Consider our original example of Mark and Peter. However, imagine that before Peter’s disclosure incident, Mark wrongs him. When Peter tries to apologize to Mark for telling their mutual friends his secret, Mark forgives with feelings of guilt. Hieronymi says such an act of forgiveness could be accompanied by thoughts such as “who am I to be angry about this; my hands are far from clean.”¹⁸ This statement leads the victim to believe he is not entitled to forgive the perpetrator, since he himself has wronged others. The issue with this reasoning is that it lowers the self-worth of the victim. In forgiving Peter with feelings of guilt, Mark considers himself unworthy of receiving a proper apology. By communicating his rather forced remorse, Mark excuses Peter for his disclosure of the secret. His expression of forgiveness is ingenuine, for it lacks the necessary ascription of self-value.

¹⁸ Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 531.

It is evident that the level of sincerity in acts of forgiveness impacts proper completion of the apology process. The potential differences in this variable, in conjunction with that of apologies, yields many possible trajectories for a verbal gesture exchange. Though this is the case, it is also essential to analyze the workings of apologies and forgiveness in *successful* instances of the apology process. There are many situations in which both acts are executed genuinely. Thus far I have examined apologies and forgiveness externally, paying attention to their broad functionality and facilitation in relationships. This comprehensive functionality analysis obligates consideration of sincerity. In the next chapter, I explore apologies and forgiveness internally. In other words, I focus on what makes the acts possible and understood. I assume both to be executed genuinely, discussing their relation from a phenomenological perspective.

III. EMPATHY

Social interactions such as apologies and forgiveness are assumed to be normative features of human society. In reality, they come to exist through widespread, mutual feelings of necessity for structure. Such verbal expressions of intent are recognized in the majority of cultures around the world. Almost universally utilized and acknowledged, both apologies and forgiveness provide the standard framework for relational repair. The presentation and often ensuing success of both acts is reliant on the experience of empathy. In this chapter, I discuss the application of empathy to the structure of the apology process. To facilitate the understanding of this relation, I will maintain that every act of apology and forgiveness discussed below is genuine. In each case of wrongdoing, both the perpetrator and the victim seek to repair their relationship such that it is restored to its formerly stable state.

Before examining apologies, forgiveness, and the importance of empathy in their formation and execution, it is crucial to first understand the simpler features of their makeup. First, the interactions are grounded in Kay Mathiesen's idea of "collective consciousness."¹⁹ What is meant by "collective consciousness?" Put simply, the term facilitates a view of reality that includes the thoughts and premonitions of multiple individuals rather than just one. It serves to combine the thoughts of "I" and the "other I."²⁰ In other words, my thoughts, and the thoughts of the person I am engaging with. Because it brings together the ideas of many, collective consciousness implies agreement. My thoughts and the thoughts of the person I am engaging with must correspond in order to contribute to any existence of collective consciousness.

¹⁹ Kay Mathiesen, "Collective Consciousness." *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind*, 2005, 235.

²⁰ Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, ICS Publications, 1989, 11.

Otherwise, it cannot be labeled “collective.” Successful apology processes are an excellent example of this collectivity at work. They fuse the desires of two individuals into one – more specifically, the desire to repair a weakened relationship.

Let us consider our previous example of Mark and Peter. Suppose that after Mark finds out Peter told their mutual friends his secret, Peter apologizes. After Peter expresses his remorse, Mark forgives him for the incident. In this situation, Mark and Peter share the desire to move past the bitterness that has weakened their friendship. This agreement between them is made possible by collective consciousness. Mark and Peter’s collective presence and outlook during the apology process enables an ultimatum. Such fruitful cases of reconciliation are typically followed by a restoration of friendly speech and reference. After reconciling, Mark and Peter can use the pronoun “we” to refer to their experience with the apology process. Suppose that Mark is prompted to explain what recently happened to his friendship with Peter. He can easily claim that he and Peter encountered a problem that resulted in a resolving conversation. He can conclude his story with the statements “we worked it out” or “we are good now.” Though “we” can very well be used in the absence of an apology or recently repaired friendship, the mutual acknowledgement of amicableness in this situation strengthens its suggestion of collectivity.

What truly defines the pronoun “we?” What allows individuals like Mark to go beyond the “I” and include other participants in their opinions, statements, or views? I have already discussed the emergence of “we” in the case of an apology with inherent collective consciousness. But the process of creating this pronoun is more intricate. It is fundamentally explained by what Ronald McIntyre calls Edmund Husserl’s “we-subjectivity.”²¹ The application

²¹ Ronald McIntyre, “3. ‘We-Subjectivity’: Husserl on Community and Communal Constitution,” *Intersubjectivity and Objectivity in Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl*, 2012, 61.

of we-subjectivity is prevalent in society by means of a primarily implicit multistep process. It first requires one individual's self-realization of a certain belief about an object. It then requires acknowledgement of another who shares the same belief. Next, it is expected that this shared acknowledgement lead to a sense of community amongst the participants. This "community" provides each self-identifying member with the feeling of belonging. In turn, belonging encourages reference to the group as "we." Applying this reasoning to the example of Mark and Peter, it is easy to understand why the men would employ "we" when speaking about their reconciliation endeavors. The apology process between the two forms a community that endorses intent to repair. The subsequent restoration of their friendship forms the foundation for their belonging.

Collective consciousness and we-subjectivity reveal the forces behind normative verbal gestures that characterize their interactive nature. Though apologies and forgiveness *feature* these concepts, they owe their existence to the overarching action of empathy. Empathy can be simply defined as the ability to feel *with* another. In situations involving empathy, the empathizer is required to recognize another individual's situation, appreciate his feelings, and be able to share his sentiment. David Woodruff Smith summarizes Edith Stein's view of the action, writing how "empathy consists...in a transfer of the sense 'I' between my own range of experience and the other's."²² Here we see another reference to the terms "I" and "other I." In my discussion of collective consciousness, I highlighted the importance of "I" and the "other I" in working together to facilitate agreement. This explanation focused on the essentiality of having a common interest. The role of "I" and the "other I" in empathy goes beyond agreement regarding an aim. It

²² David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, Taylor and Francis, 2013, 218.

involves one entity having a “direct experience” of the other. This direct experience implies that the “I” immediately understands the situation and outlook of the “other I.”²³

It is not the case that direct experience, especially in cases of uniting intentions, is identical for all individuals. Empathy allows for unity by prioritizing both *recognition* and *understanding* of another’s experience. The “I” empathizes with the “other I” by first reading his emotions, then sharing his sentiment. Individuals experience feelings in their own unique ways but can extend their understanding to infer those of others. It is in this manner that one can feel *with* another. Apologies and forgiveness are reliant on empathy, for their participants are obligated to extend their experiences. Consider the example of Mark and Peter. In completing the apology process, Peter first apologizes to Mark by explicitly displaying remorse for his behavior. By doing so, he communicates his feelings of regret while simultaneously making evident his intention to reconcile with Mark. While listening to Peter, Mark feels relief for receiving the apology. But more importantly, he acknowledges and understands Peter’s aim in apologizing. In that moment, it is relatively simple for Mark to put himself in Peter’s place. He is able to imagine himself experiencing the situation from the perspective of the perpetrator. When Mark forgives Peter, Peter associates with Mark’s experience in responding to remorse. This empathetic exchange is imperative to apology processes.

In order to understand the more complex mechanisms of empathy, it is important to distinguish between primordial and non-primordial acts of intuition. Primordial intuition can be defined as the act of directly perceiving a phenomenon. Conversely, non-primordial intuition occurs in instances of recollection or indirect perception. According to Stein, the act of

²³ David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 220.

empathizing is non-primordial.²⁴ Though the foundation for recognition of another human being is primordial, the added element of empathy turns the intuition non-primordial. When one individual observes another, he first acknowledges the other's presence in a primordial fashion. Consider a man who observes a woman at the fair. He first perceives her present existence. Then, he observes her emotion or stance. Since the woman is at the fair, she displays visible feelings of happiness. The man recognizes this feeling and *understands* the woman's experience, but he does not necessarily genuinely feel the same emotion. Even if he is also feeling happy because he is at the fair, his own emotion is distinct from that of the woman's. If he is not feeling happy, he may need to apply his *recollection* of a happy memory in order to follow through with understanding the woman's experience. Regardless of similarity, there is an undeniable certain distance between their experiences, for they are separate individuals. This distance is what prompts Stein to designate empathy as non-primordial.

How is the designation of empathy as non-primordial relevant to apologies? First, its non-primordial nature is essential in forming *intersubjectivity* as its foundation. Intersubjectivity occupies an important space within social ontology, for it serves as a foil for subjectivity and objectivity. It refers to a certain relation between people – one in which there is an agreement regarding the perception of an object.²⁵ Intersubjectivity is essential to the realization of humans as social beings, for it defines their interactions. When one individual interacts with another, he can generally assume that the other has similar interpretations of certain objects. This ability to assume is a result of intersubjectivity and common perception. This situation is not always realistic, but I will assume it to be true for the purposes of this text.

²⁴ Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 10.

²⁵ David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 218.

Consider the familiar situation in which Peter apologizes to Mark. Peter intends to display his remorse, and therefore communicates his feelings to Mark. He makes evident that he would like to repair their relationship. Mark, forgiving him, conveys to him the message that he feels the same way. Mark's actions reveal to Peter that he is both acknowledging and appreciating the given apology. Peter evidently knows that as the "I," he is undoubtedly sorry for having wronged Mark. He is *evidently* aware of this fact because he is the subject of experience in the situation. Since he is a participant in their friendship, he acknowledges Mark as the subject of his own stream of consciousness. Mark then becomes the "other I," displaying feelings of forgiveness toward Peter. Peter understands these feelings as being products of Mark's decision to reconcile with him. Since both Mark and Peter display aligned intentions to repair their relationship, they successfully overcome the disclosure incident. Here I once again observe empathy combining Mark and Peter's sentiments. Furthermore, their interactions and comparable interpretations of repair serve to reveal intersubjectivity at work. Though their intentions are deemed comparable, Mark and Peter's perceptions of each other are still *non-primordial* in nature. Their intuitions can help supply similar understandings of their recently mended friendship, but a difference in experience remains.

Lastly, it is important to discuss the structure of *constitution* within apologies and how exactly it creates this form of social reality. Constitution itself refers to the coming together of meanings to present things in our surrounding world.²⁶ When observing an object or phenomenon, an individual intends to experience perception. Through this perception, he records

²⁶ David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 286.

that observed object in his mind. This recording remains in his mind as a collection of properties derived from his original intention.

Constitution plays an important role in apologies, for the social interaction is an epitome of meaning. Consider yet again the example of Mark and Peter. When expressing his remorse, Peter is aware of his own constitution of the apology he is giving Mark. He acknowledges a meaning for the apology – this may be trust, loyalty, congeniality, or a combination of other important features. For the sake of this example, let us assume that the meaning is trust. Following from this, Peter perceives his apology as representing the feeling of trust. His expression of remorse becomes inextricably linked to the sentiment of trust and is thus recorded in his mind as such. This idea remains in his mind as his true perception of the apology. In addition, he observes Mark constituting his given apology. In our example, let us assume Mark's constitution of the apology is also representative of trust. This observance of similarities prompts Peter to realize the mutual understanding of meaning between him and Mark. They share a common perception of the exchange, revealing the intersubjectivity at its basis. Empathy allows for and explains this process.

So far, our discussion of empathy has been limited to cases of perfect apology processes – those in which the perpetrator and victim both sincerely seek to repair their weakened relationship. But these circumstances, though ideal, are not always realistic. Let us consider the Mark and Peter case once again. As stated, assume that Mark is accustomed to trusting Peter, so he tells him a secret. He later finds out Peter told their mutual friends the secret and is upset by the fact. After the incident, Mark observes Peter openly ridiculing him about the secret and disclosing the information to even more people. Thus, Mark slowly begins to develop an opposition to accepting Peter's potential apology. After some time, Peter attempts to apologize.

Mark does not want to forgive him, but learns that something very unfortunate has befallen Peter. Upon realizing this, Mark experiences a change in attitude and forgives Peter out of pity. The verbal gesture is still sincere, but for different reasons.

In this case, the apology and forgiveness exchange is still reliant on empathy. Remember the example of the man observing the happy woman at the fair. Similar to how the man understands the woman's happiness, Mark *understands* Peter's desperation to be forgiven because of his dire situation. He is able to do so through recollection of a time when he was also preoccupied with more urgent matters. Mark thus exercises empathy via non-primordial intuition to recognize Peter's situation and complete the apology process.

There exist several more nontraditional circumstances under which empathy is utilized to fulfill the requirements of the apology process. Regardless of the conditions surrounding the exchange, a successful apology process guarantees relational repair at least temporarily. In most cases, the repair restores the relationship for a significant amount of time. This is because apologies and forgiveness present individuals with learning experiences that encourage valuing their social connections. It is with this focus on value that I next demonstrate how acts of apology and forgiveness promote the association of friendship.

IV. FRIENDSHIP

Apology, forgiveness, and empathy are interconnected not only in their mutual presence during the apology process. Besides allowing normative verbal gestures to function *within* personal associations, they also make the continuation of those very associations *possible*. Primarily, the familiar social relationship of friendship. The association of friendship owes its formal existence to apologies, forgiveness, and their common grounding in empathy. In order to reveal this correlation, it is crucial to analyze the previous chapters' foci with regard to their enabling of friendship. For the purposes of analysis, in this chapter I assume friendship to be the generally harmonious relationship between two individuals.

It is helpful to first understand the association of friendship in a broader context. Friendship, based on its defining factors, can be characterized as a paradigm form of community. As was illustrated in chapter three, presence of community is essential for we-subjectivity. The emergence of this pronoun promotes common reference to a given relationship. "We" usage distinguishes community from a random assortment of individuals by its collectivity. The term implies regular agreement, mutual understanding, and contribution to a common objective. Widespread empathy facilitates the formation of communities. Each member identifies as "I," views his or her companions as "other Is," and proceeds to continuously recognize this group as a collective. Common objectives allow for the existence of communities by means of intersubjectivity.

To review, intersubjectivity produces community by furthering the foundation set by Mathiesen's "collective consciousness." As David Woodruff Smith writes, in our intersubjective natural world, any given individual "sees things around [him] in space-time...understand[s] these

things to be ‘there for everyone,’ perceivable by others, utilizable by others, and so forth.”²⁷ This understanding is representative of community ideology. All members of a group first acknowledge each other's existence, *recognize* common perception, then act according to the state of affairs. Common perception in community can refer to that which is assigned to members’ intent, roles, or expected contribution to a collaborative goal.

Friendship emerges as a paradigm form of community by being representative of collective features on a smaller scale. Whilst a community boasts multiple individuals interacting collectively and recognizing each other’s consciousness, a friendship features two. Regardless of size, the two remain comparable if valued by contribution to the relationship. This contribution is generally directly related to the existence of a common objective. Though this objective may very well be specific, the more subtle common goal that is not always evident is continuity. The primary factor responsible for community flourishing is that which transcends interpersonal alignment and emphasizes temporal length. A community is significant and relevant if, through uninterrupted engagement, it persists in existing. Friendships are an excellent example of this condition in action.

Let us proceed by using Husserl’s characterization of “personal unities” to describe communities such as friendships.²⁸ A personal unity takes into consideration all the discussed properties of recognition, belonging, and contribution. Husserl calls attention to the essentiality of continuity in sustaining communities by arguing that personal unities “preserve themselves by lasting through time.”²⁹ A personal unity is rather purposeless if it is not propelled by the

²⁷ David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 2013, 217.

²⁸ Kay Mathiesen, “Collective Consciousness,” 242.

²⁹ Kay Mathiesen, “Collective Consciousness,” 242.

engagement of its members. Proper proactivity and morale maintenance is required to secure achievement of a common objective. It is typical to find that most successful personal unities are those that have withstood decades of external change and internal complications.

The success of a given friendship is dependent on its status. A friendship, though not always perfect, only survives if there is a mutual understanding of its requirements. Both participants of the relationship must display effort to engage in its entailments. Often, amicable engagement for will not be static. It is expected that those involved in the friendship will need to overcome various obstacles. Our example of such an obstacle has been the disclosure of a secret. In the case of Mark and Peter, the disclosure incident represents a temporary dissonance in the men's otherwise stable friendship. Assuming that both friends value their relationship, they are prompted to take action and restore its previous state. This participation implies both Mark and Peter's dedication to relational repair. Sarah Stroud claims that "friendship is or involves a kind of commitment...our friendships structure our deliberations, operating as (defeasible) fixed points or parameters within which we resolve the issues with which we are presented"³⁰ This resolving of issues is entirely dependent on apologies and forgiveness. In order to recover their social relationship from the effects of the disruption, Mark and Peter must take part in the apology process. First, Peter must apologize to Mark for disclosing his secret. Then, Mark must forgive Peter for the incident. All the while, both men will act on the foundation of empathy in their mutual understanding. Completion of the apology process, made possible by shared intent to repair, will restore their friendship. In addition to restoration, it will also *promote* and *enable* the friendship.

³⁰ Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," *Ethics*, 2006, 511.

The enabling of friendships is attributed to apologies and forgiveness for their repairing qualities. Considered jointly, both acts facilitate a return to amicable relations that is so often desired after disruption. More importantly, beyond facilitation of this return, apologies and forgiveness guarantee continuity through repair. In the example of Mark and Peter, both men's commitment to the apology process will ensure a continuation of their friendship. This continuation may not always be long-lasting, but will at least temporarily extend the participants' stable social relationship.

While arguing that apologies and forgiveness enable friendship, it is equally essential to understand how the absence of the apology process equates to lack of formal structure for reconciliation. Suppose that Mark has just realized Peter disclosed his secret to their mutual friends. Upon telling Peter about his disappointment but willingness to repair the relationship, Mark is informed of Peter's desire to also repair. Imagine that the apology process is unavailable and the men must reconcile in another fashion. It is of course possible that Mark and Peter exchange looks and immediately communicate mutual restoration of their friendly relationship. However, this sort of instant physical understanding is uncommon.

It is expected that the disruption of a social relationship be followed by a proper conversation between the two participants. Civil discussion and problem solving to ensure friendship continuity are almost exclusively reliant on the apology process. Participants of a friendship who are interested in repair must *almost always* utilize the apology process if they intend to discuss and achieve reconciliation. It is through this reliance that the relation between the apology process and friendship is revealed. Fundamentally, friendship presupposes acts of apology and forgiveness. The social relationship takes verbal gestures to be inherent components

of its turbulent essence. It functions and endures disruptions by virtue of support from those very components.

In addition to its reliance on acts of apology and forgiveness for continuity, friendship also entails certain expectations for its participants that are reinforced by those very acts. When individuals such as Mark and Peter experience the apology process, they are reminded of what friendship necessitates. Each instance of the apology process in ensuring continuity enlightens the individuals who are participating. For example, after reconciling, Mark and Peter are expected to more strongly emphasize the value of their friendship. Their participation in apologizing and forgiving prompts a realization that the apology process can indeed allow them to reconcile. It simultaneously encourages an avoidance of future obstacles. This reasoning is in accordance with Stroud's argument that "friendship places demands...on our motivations."³¹ One such motivation is loyalty.³² Friends who support continuity of their associations are expected to exercise loyalty during reconciliation proceedings. More importantly, the displays of loyalty during those proceedings can strengthen the future of the friendship. Visible success from apology processes serves as incentive for the forthcoming value and utility of motivations. This interpretation further reveals the enabling nature of verbal gestures.

I confidently argue that apologies and forgiveness make the continuation of friendships possible, due to the malleable nature of the association. In a perfect world, not all friendships are prone to disagreements and complications. Such circumstances would discredit any analysis of social reality involving expectations of relational repair. It is the susceptibility of real friendships that results in their occasional dissonance. The return to a harmonious relationship is facilitated

³¹ Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," 499.

³² Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship," 503.

by mutual empathy, which allows for the apology process to take place. It is the elements of the apology process – apology and forgiveness – that promote friendship and guarantee its continuity.

CONCLUSION

Acts of apology and forgiveness, though sometimes executed effortlessly in everyday conversations, are complex social interactions. The true success of an apology process is dependent on factors such as sincerity, recognition, and willingness. The genuineness of apologies can be discerned from their agreement with the cognitive, affective, conative, and attitudinal components. The same scaling procedure can be applied to forgiveness but by calculating its accordance with specific judgements. Recognition and willingness are features of the apology process that are fueled by its original grounding in empathy. An exchange of apology and forgiveness that benefits both its participants includes mutual acknowledgement and intent for relational repair. Beyond facilitating reconciliation, empathy provides the basis for friendship. Apology and forgiveness, as experiential elements of empathy, promote the social relationship that designates two individuals “friends.” The quality that demonstrates this claim is continuity. Without acts of apology and forgiveness, friendships would lack the structure required to drive the relationship forward.

Throughout this thesis I have highlighted the workings of apologies and forgiveness to reveal what I consider to be their most important features. I have discussed their individual components and explained the force behind their mutual existence. It is through this presentation that I hope the reader has gained awareness to value both normative verbal gestures and social relationships.

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