Exploring an Account of Conditional Forgiveness

Abstract: Forgiveness is important to us in our moral lives. We often forgive, and ask for forgiveness from others. The discussions of forgiveness occur commonly in politics, sociology, and philosophy. But what is forgiveness? Forgiveness is not a matter of manipulating one’s negative emotions; it is not to deal ‘away’ with pain and anger. If it were then taking a pill or hypnosis would count as forgiveness. I shall argue in this article that forgiveness is a process where one rationally revises judgements that undergird resentment. This rational revision involves efforts on the part of the victim. Reasons play an important role in revising one’s judgements. The focus of this article is to address two main issues. First, what is forgiveness? How is excusing different from forgiving? What happens when a victim forgives a wrongdoer? Second, how is forgiveness related to apology, obligation, and condoning? What role do reasons such as apology and remorse play in forgiveness? Are we morally obliged to forgive a wrongdoer who has undertaken reparative steps? If not, then, is forgiveness a condoning act?

Keywords: Forgiveness, apology, sentiments, excusing, reasons, justification, obligation.

INTRODUCTION

I have forgiven them – said the Nobel Peace prize winner Malala Yousafzai, when she was asked whether she has forgiven her Taliban bombers who had shot her in the head when she was fighting for the right to girls’ education in Pakistan. Such forgiveness did not involve any repentance from the wrongdoer, or any acknowledgment for the offense, to the least. Malala did not wait for her offenders to apologize for the wrong they have committed, nor did she expect any change of heart in the wrongdoer. Was her forgiveness justified? Does the wrongdoer deserve or owe forgiveness? A large amount of literature on forgiveness reveals that many writers do not admire forgiveness to be granted unless the wrongdoer has apologized or repented for his actions.1

It is often claimed and taken for granted that forgiveness is something that we do for reasons. For instance, Murphy lists out five general reasons that render appropriate an act of forgiveness (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 24). For Hieronymi, an apology acts as a reason which brings about a change in view or a rational revision in judgement that allows one to forswear resentment (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 545). While others think that in the process of forgiving, some ‘baseline conditions’ must be met by both the parties for forgiveness to occur (Griswold, 2007, pp. 49-50,115).

In contrast, many religious traditions believe that forgiveness is an unconditional moral duty that ought to be performed regardless of the conditions fulfilled.2 In his famous sermons, Butler explicates his view that forgiveness is absolutely necessary which God wants us to perform (Butler, 1729, p. sermon 9; Garcia, 2011, p. 12). Calhoun expresses this idea by stating that forgiveness is never obligatory (Calhoun, 1992, p. 81). Part of the reasons that motivate this account is that these philosophers view forgiveness as a generous or a charitable act that can only be hoped for rather than demanded by the wrongdoer.

Our aim in this paper is to survey two questions about forgiveness. First, what is the nature of forgiveness? Specifically, my concern is to make sense of the idea that there are distinct roles that ‘reasons’ play in differentiating an act of excusing from an act of forgiveness. I shall argue that forgiveness is a moral act which involves more than mere manipulation of negative feelings towards the wrongdoer to differentiate it from related but distinct notions, such as excusing and justifying. Second, I shall explore the view whether conditional moral forgiveness is permissible or not? While it is always admirable to forgive, it is necessary for us to know whether certain set of conditions fulfilled by the wrongdoer commit victims to forgive or not? And, if the conditions oblige one to forgive, is forgiveness deserved, or it would amount to condonation where the victim acquiesces in the offense? Since there are a number of conceptions on the model of forgiveness, the hope here is to appreciate that a coherent account of forgiveness is defensible.

1 Among those advocating ‘right reasons’ in order to forgive are (Kolnai, 1973, p. 101); (Roberts, 1995, p. 293); (Novitz, 1998, pp. 304-306); (Richard Swinburne, 1989, pp. 74-76).

2 This approach is commonly advocated by Christians in particular - the idea that people should forgive others as Jesus forgives us for our sins. For Enright and Coyle, forgiveness is seen as a “moral gift given to someone who does not necessarily deserve it” (Coyle & Enright, 1998, p. 150).
ANALYZING FORGIVENESS

Let us start by considering some of the things that an account of forgiveness entails. First, forgiveness is seen as an interpersonal relation between two persons, where the victim who is wronged explicitly grants forgiveness to the wrongdoer who has committed some wrong (Allais, 2008, p. 37). Second, the need for forgiveness arises when the wrongdoer has voluntarily committed wrong all things considered (Lang, 1994, p. 106), or he has behaved immorally by inflicting wrong upon the victim (Kolnai, 1973, p. 93). Third, forgiveness is considered as a difficult and an emotional process where the victim undergoes a journey in order to decide whether she is ready to forgive or not (Horsbrugh, 1974, p. 271; Milam, 2018, p. 572; Scarre, 2016, p. 933). However, there are some cases where forgiveness is granted easily without involving much psychological burden on the victim. In various religious cultures, for instance, Christianity, forgiveness is considered as an ethical ideal where one should forgive others as Jesus forgave us for our sins (Bash, 2007, p. 2). When religious cultures praise the virtue of forgiveness, it is often based on the idea that feelings of resentment and hurt are not good for the social well-being of a person. On the contrary, Richards emphasizes that though the act of forgiveness is admirable, one is never wrong in failing to forgive (Richards, 1988, p. 80). This is similar to what Murphy argues, where he suggests, “forgiveness is not always a virtue” (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 17), one should value one’s dignity and respect above all.

In order to evaluate the reasons for forgiveness, we need to first understand the nature of forgiveness generally. Forgiving, as is usually held by most philosophers, constitutes at least two conditions. First, one must overcome his negative feelings towards the wrongdoer and the committed offense. Second, forgiveness must be done for the right kind of reasons. The first condition identifies overcoming resentment as central to most cases of forgiveness (Butler, 1729; Strawson, 2008, p. 6). But there are some philosophers who suggest that overcoming resentment is not sufficient for forgiveness to occur (Roberts, 1995, p. 291). Richards defends his view that in order to forgive, one must abandon all the negative feelings the victim has towards the wrongdoer (Richards, 1988, p. 79). In spite of some agreement that overcoming resentment is central to forgiveness, there is little idea as to how resentment must be understood. Some think of resentment as overcoming of ‘hostile feelings’ towards the wrongdoer (Garrard & McNaughton, 2003, p. 41), while others like (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 530) hold it is a kind of ‘moral protest’ against the wrongfulness. Furthermore, Hughes claims that resentment is a ‘moral anger’ (Hughes, 1993, p. 332), and on Murphy’s account, forsaking of resentment must occur on ‘moral grounds’ (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 16). For Allais, resentment is an example of Strawson’s reactive attitude which is a kind of an emotional reaction that the victim generates towards the wrongdoer (Allais, 2008, p. 42). On Hampton’s view, resentment is a sign of defending one’s self-respect (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 13). In any case, it is commonly suggested that when a wrongful act is committed, the victim is bound to develop hurt feelings towards the wrongdoer. Those hurt feelings might constitute resentment or anger, and the victim might expect apology from the wrongdoer for what he has done. In order for forgiveness to occur, the victim must forswear his negative feelings, and perhaps generate some positive attitude that may or may not constitute re-acceptance.

The second condition captures the distinction between conditional forgiveness and unconditional forgiveness. While it is admirable to forgive, many philosophers accept that there must be right reasons to forgive. In many cases, which involve serious offenses (murders, rape), unconditional forgiveness is an expression of either holding that one is too willing to forgive (Richard Swinburne, 1989, pp. 85-86), or the tendency to forgive is a sign of lack of self-respect (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, pp. 17-18).

A DISTINCT ROLE FOR FORGIVENESS

The first difficulty is to make sense of what is involved in overcoming resentment, and still maintaining the judgement about the wrongness of the offense and the wrongdoer’s responsibility for it. Forgiving seems to mean having an understanding of the nature of offense, but if understanding involves ceasing to blame the offender, then forgiveness requires holding onto one’s blame or else there will be nothing left to forgive. Consider the following example. Imagine that you resent your mother for her strong decisions at your teenage, and now much later in life, you understand reasons behind her actions. If you now cease your resentment and you do not hold your mother responsible for the actions, then there is nothing left to forgive. The case of overcoming resentment because of

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3 This is not incompatible with forgiveness where an entire group suffers the harm (May, 1987). For example, Blacks and native Americans have been wronged by the United States Government several times. But I shall restrict myself to cases of interpersonal forgiveness where the victim has a moral standing or authority to forgive.

4 The crucial factor here is a ‘wrongful harm’, as understood, which is quite complex, where the harm includes not just the physical and mental damage caused to the victim, but also involves showing disrespect to the victim. For Lang, even the intention to carry out a wrongful act is a wrong committed towards the victim (Lang, 1994, p. 106).

5 Hampton and Murphy defend the Butlerian account of forgiveness, “Forgiveness, Butler teaches, is the forsaking of resentment” (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 15). Besides them, many philosophers sympathize with this traditional account of Butler see, for example, (Hughes, 1993); (Hieronymi, 2001); (Roberts, 1995); (Horsbrugh, 1974); (Darwall, 2006, p. 72); (Griswold, 2007, p. 40) and (Calhoun, 1992, p. 81).

6 The idea that forgiveness constitutes re-acceptance is favored by (Kolnai, 1973, p. 104); (Roberts, 1995, p. 299). For Scarre, a period of ‘probation’ where the victim might wish to see some remorse or penance from the wrongdoer can act as a qualifying condition for restoring relationships (Scarre, 2016, p. 934).

For Garrard & McNaughton, full restoration of relationships is not “always required, desirable, or even permissible” (Garrard & McNaughton, 2003, p. 45).

7 This is a variant of what Kolnai calls the ‘paradox of forgiveness’ where forgiveness involves some change in attitude towards the wrongdoer and still holds the wrongdoer’s culpability for the offense (Kolnai, 1973, pp. 96-97); (Nelkin, 2013, p. 166).
my mental hygiene is not forgiveness (Richards, 1988, p. 79), since it need not involve any change in view about the wrongdoer and his offense (Calhoun, 1992, pp. 78-79). The challenge then is to navigate between the cases of forgiveness where you hold that the act performed was wrong and the wrongdoer is responsible for the offense, and the cases of excusing where you withhold the wrongdoer’s culpability for the offense.

In our daily life, we acknowledge a variety of ways in which victims overcome their resentment without falling into the necessity of whether they have forgiven or not. Excusing involves that the victim has withhold his resentment as the agent was not fully responsible for the offense, and justifying involves that the wrong act committed by the wrongdoer was reasonable in the circumstances. In these cases one overcomes resentment by reevaluating the judgements about the offense in which we think there is nothing left to forgive. Many writers on forgiveness are united in accepting the view that forgiveness requires forswearing resentment. But one may forswear resentment in many ways such as excusing. The core notion of forgiveness comes into play when you have been harmed in such a way that the harm can neither be excused or justified, nor can be accepted at any cost.

Hieronymi’s paper, proposes a way forward. One of the primary worries in Hieronymi’s paper is, that the dominant view on forgiveness falls into “the all-too-common habit of talking about resentment and anger as things to be manipulated- to be “banished,” “dissipated”... rather than as attitudes sensitive to one’s judgements, subject to rational revision” (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 535). In Hieronymi’s terminology, such views of forgiveness are ‘non-articulate’. The general point here is that emotions such as resentment and anger have content and justification, which when subjected to rational revisions, can undermine (in properly functioning psyches) resentment. According to Hieronymi, an account of forgiveness must be ‘articulate’ – the victim must possess some sort of commitment to each of the following:

1) Wrong: the act by the wrongdoer is a wrong moral offense.
2) Responsible: the wrongdoer intentionally performs the wrongful act, and is responsible for the act, and as such can be blamed.
3) Self-worth: I as the victim should not be wronged (Zaragoza, 2012, p. 607).

On her account, the three judgements must be retained by the victim to distinguish from notions such as excusing and justifying, because to excuse is to absolve the wrongdoer of responsibility and blame. We need to further identify a judgement that undergirds resentment, and can be rationally revised to have a case for forgiveness. The fourth judgement is the ‘Threat’ which is implied conclusively by the above three judgements. Given this understanding of resentment, a sincere apology can bring a change in the judgement of the victim, cancelling the threat, while retaining the original three judgements (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 548).

Let us state three reasons that necessitate us an account of forgiveness that rests upon rational revision of judgment. First, any non-articulate account would involve mere ceasing of one’s negative feelings toward the wrongdoer by indirect manipulations, such as understanding of the wrongdoer’s historical background, or sympathizing with the motives of his action. These conditions though undermine resentment; there is a danger on the part of the victim acquiescing the offense. Second, as Zaragoza has suggested, the non-articulate account involves either a) the non-rational manipulations of feelings by which one eliminates resentment; or b) the loss of resentment itself without any process (Zaragoza, 2012, p. 609). However, the problem with the first view is, there is no hope or guarantee that eliminating resentment by undergoing a process will constitute forgiveness. Alternatively, the second suggestion has the unwelcoming result of accepting forgiveness as a passive process which might just happen rather than a deliberate intentional process (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 540; Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 15). Third, as opposed to the strong descriptive thesis advanced by Scarre that forgiveness is a commitment which once granted cannot be taken back (Scarre, 2016, pp. 932-933), the cases where emotions are indirectly manipulated, one leaves ‘open’ the act of forgiveness.”

Thus, an articulate account prevents forgiveness from becoming passive, and it helps in differentiating it from related notions such as excusing and justifying.

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8 Calhoun’s account distinguishes forgiveness in two ways: 1) Minimalist forgiving-cases where an injury remains unaddressed by the victim – the cases of excusing and justifying. For instance, the victim overcomes her resentment either because it is emotionally damaging to her or she undergoes hypnosis to relieve her mental stress (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, pp. 22-23). 2) Aspirational forgiving - the victim is entitled to her resentment and hold the wrongdoer culpable for his offense (Calhoun, 1992, pp. 77-81).

9 For Kolnai these are the matters of ‘slight importance’ where the victim does not generate any retributive attitude or indignation towards the wrongdoer (Kolnai, 1973, p. 94).

10 The idea that this is the core aspect of forgiveness is expressed by a number of philosophers; see, for example (Lang, 1994, pp. 106-107); (Nelkin, 2013, p. 146); (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 530); and (Calhoun, 1992, p. 77).

11 According to Hieronymi, Novitz (1998)’s account urges something like this. When the victim understands wrongdoer’s motive behind the offense, and offers sympathetic understanding towards it, clearly forgiveness becomes a form of pity (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 534).

12 The metaphor ‘wiping the slate clean’ closely resembles this idea. Forgiveness involves undertaking a commitment that the slate has been wiped clean (Bennett, 2018). When the victim says, ‘I forgive you’, the victim declares to the wrongdoer that you are not required to apologize further, and the victim is required to cease his resentment and blame. But if forgiveness is a commitment, one cannot forgive the dead (Russell, 2020, p. 7).

13 A key principle behind Hieronymi’s account is resentment is a psychological state that comprises of certain judgements. To see more into the ‘cognitivist’ account of emotions, refer to Roberts, “what an emotion is: A Sketch” (Roberts, 1988).
Nelkin, however, finds this view uninteresting. Consider a case where a 14-year-old girl has been gang raped. There might be sincere apology from the offenders as well as genuine repentance. Also, the victim recognizes that the past action no longer poses a continuous threat. Does it mean that the victim has forgiven? It is difficult to acknowledge that the victim can morally or rationally revise her judgements in order to forgive her offenders (Nelkin, 2013, pp. 171-172). Warmke points out another problem with this account. If for Hieronymi, an articulate account of forgiveness provides 'standing authority' to the victim to forgive, then the forgiver must have a voluntary control over forgiveness. But there are cases, where one forgives other without choosing or deciding voluntarily to forgive (Warmke, 2015, pp. 496-497). A similar worry is raised by Zaragoza against Hieronymi's account. Her account does not involve a 'moral standing authority' to the victim who has suffered wrong by the wrongdoer (Zaragoza, 2012, p. 615).

Where does this lead us? In my view, an account of forgiveness must explain why mere fading of resentment does not constitute forgiveness, it must entail a rational revision of judgements. But whether and when forgiveness must be granted depends upon contingent facts about the wrongness of the act, the victim’s suffering, and the sufficient ‘reasons’. I shall say more about this in the next section.

**ARE REASONS FOR FORGIVENESS SUFFICIENT?**

In analysis of the nature of forgiveness based upon reasons, three factors are frequently mentioned which I shall address in this section. First, forgiveness must be done for the right kind of reasons. Second, if reasons generate requirements, then forgiveness is an obligation. Third, one might be condoning wrongdoing if there are no reasons to forgive. The task, therefore, is to evaluate these judgements to see whether forgiveness based upon reasons is a plausible account or not?

Above, I mentioned that the major factor responsible for distinguishing forgiveness from excusing is the victim’s judgement that the act committed is wrong and there is something left to forgive. Another factor to see is whether the victim alters her judgement about the wrongness of the offense when the wrongdoer has ‘undone’ the harm by apologizing, expressing remorse, restitution, penance, and so forth. Though the list of reasons is exhaustive, I shall restrict myself to the general category of ‘reasons’ that makes forgiveness more likely. For instance, Murphy lists out five general reasons to forgive (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 24), and Richards advocates that the severity of the offense and the recency of the wrongful act determines whether forgiveness is morally permissible or not (Richards, 1988, pp. 94-95). The motivation behind this is, forgiveness is frequently represented as a gift-like (Scarre, 2016, p. 935), or an act of grace (Pettigrove, 2012) which cannot be demanded by the wrongdoer. This kind of approach argues that though for some heinous crime (murders, gang rape) forgiveness is impossible, but when the wrongdoer expresses his remorse or apology, he has made appropriate restitution that makes forgiveness more likely. Though remorse or an apology cannot undo the harm caused, the idea is, the ‘wrong’ itself has been annulled by undergoing a process of restitution and reparation. On this account, forgiveness is justifiable when the wrongdoer has ‘made up’ for his offense, and it would no w be inappropriate for the victim to be resentful.

The question raised is this: is forgiveness morally possible with reasons such as repentance or apology? Consider for instance, a husband who has apologized to his wife for his infidelity. The wife accepts the apology and forgives the husband. Later on, she finds that her husband is still cheating on her. Is apology then a sufficient reason? For Scarre, once the process of forgiveness is done, there is no looking back (Scarre, 2016, p. 934). In this case, if forgiveness is revoked, there was no genuine forgiveness given at the first place. Roberts claims that the status of repentance is a reason for restoring relationships: one values the moral commonality that unites the victim and the wrongdoer (Roberts, 1995, p. 294). For Murphy, there must be ‘moral grounds’ in order for forgiveness to occur (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 24). The rationale behind this is that Murphy stresses on divorcing the act of the agent from the agent himself. He claims that when a wrongful act is committed, the wrongdoer sends an ‘insulting message’ to the victim, and by divorcing his wrongful act (in case of apologizing and expressing remorse), the message is no longer endorsed by the wrongdoer (Murphy & Hampton, 1988, p. 25).

To the other extreme, Richards testifies to the claim that though a repentant wrongdoer who is “bruised in the heart” and “is pained by the victim’s suffering”, act as reasons to forgive, they don’t mandate forgiveness (Richards, 1988, p. 89). Lauritzen argues that there is no reason which can generate requirement to forgive as “injury, however slight, may constitute a legitimate reason for breaking the relationship” (Lauritzen, 1987, p. 149). Although Hiernymi’s account focuses on _apology_ as a sufficient reason, she...

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14 Warmke believes that Hiernymi’s discussion of articulate account of forgiveness is motivated by the cases of justification and excusing, where the victim forgives byrationally revising her judgements. The same thought is carried over to the cases of forgiveness (Warmke, 2015, p. 497).
15 Roberts lists out five considerations that favor forgiveness. The important being the “the moral commonality with the offender”. The wrongdoer takes the same position of disapproval of his action as what the victim takes. Taking this in consideration, the victim must overcome her ‘alienation’ in order to forgive (Roberts, 1995, pp. 297-298).
16 St Augustine’s famous dictum, “hate the sin, love the sinner” is in focus here. There is a need to separate the wrong act from the agent. Though the identity of the offender is not changed by expressing remorse or an apology, “proven change of heart” constitutes the standard occasion to forgive (Kolnai, 1973, p. 101).
17 Swinburne emphasizes on the concept of guilt and debt that is incurred by the wrongdoer. He mentions ‘atonement’ as a process to remove the guilt for our wrongdoing (RG Swinburne, 2013, p. 2).
points to the idea of ‘unilateral forgiveness’ in cases where the victim receives a strong community support (Hieronymi, 2001, p. 553).

Though there can never be necessary reasons where forgiveness becomes a mandate, but I do sympathize with the fact that reasons can generate requirements. It is because a) The wrongdoer while expressing remorse acknowledges the responsibility for the offense, and he condemns his action of wrongdoing. b) Though the aim of forgiveness is not to reform the wrongdoer, forgiveness might create a positive change of attitude in the wrongdoer’s life. c) In some cases, forgiveness is considered as an emotional process for the victims, but a reason to forgive might close the matter once and for all. As Allais comments, “in forgiving, we allow the wrongdoer to make a genuinely fresh start; the slate is wiped clean” (Allais, 2008, p. 68).

Allais raises a strong argument against the reasons generating requirement approach. If the reasons generate requirements to forgive, then forgiveness ceases to be elective - forgiveness is not at victim’s discretion (Allais, 2013, p. 642). Forgiveness becomes rationally required if sufficient reasons have been fulfilled. Conversely, it implies that those cases where repentance and remorse has not occurred, the victim must not forgive the wrongdoer. On her account, emotions such as resentment and anger are retributive reactive attitudes (Strawson, 2008, pp. 9-12) that evaluate the wrongdoer in response to his actions, and in forgiving, one ceases to hold the retributive attitudes (Allais, 2013, pp. 645-646). This account gives optionality to the victim as the victim is entitled to see her wrongdoer, the way she wants.

Consider for instance, Jason promised his wife Jesse to reach on time for their first anniversary. But due to work commitment, he reached late that day. Seeing this, Jesse got angry and upset at Jason’s action. Let us analyze this in two plausible situations:

**Case 1:** Jesse is upset and angry at Jason for what he did but when Jason apologized for his act and ‘made up’ for his harm, Jesse forgives.

**Case 2:** Jesse is upset and angry for what Jason did. Jason did not apologize for his action. The very next day he went on his usual routines without understanding Jesse’s situation.

How would one analyze the above cases? Milam claimed that one always has reasons either to forgive or not to forgive. The reasons themselves add up to generate the requirements (Milam, 2018, p. 575). The requirements so generated, depends upon the severity of the offense, and the sufficiency of reasons. In the above case, Jason decision to ask for forgiveness might generate a positive change of attitude in Jesse’s reaction. However, Warmke thinks that reasons can never generate requirements (Warmke, 2015, pp. 505-506). If forgiveness is held as an act of grace or a gift, then an apology creates an obligation in the part of the victim, and forgiveness ceases to be gift-like.

Let me address this problem: do reasons generate obligations to forgive? The term ‘obligations’ is strongly associated with Kantian claim of moral duty (Silber, 1960). But when we talk about reasons as generating obligations, forgiveness is sometimes an obligation but not a strict duty. Forgiveness is not a compulsion; it is what Calhoun says a change of heart on the victim’s part. The commitment of forgiveness can never be generated forcefully by the wrongdoer (Richards, 1988, p. 96) as the feelings of resentment and anger are not strictly at victim’s will. The request for reasons though can create a possible situation where the victim obligations to the wrongdoer, but such an obligation is not a strict mandate, and it is still at victim’s discretion (Milam, 2018, pp. 575-577). Further, the request for reasons is not “perfect tense” sense which means that if these five conditions are fulfilled, the victim must forgive the wrongdoer (Griswold, 2007, p. 42). May be one can never fulfill Bennett’s standards of obligations that a wrongful act generates, and this is because forgiveness is a praiseworthy, gratuitous, and a time taken process.

Let us now deal with the last problem: without repentance, forgiveness threatens to collapse into condonation. Kolnai accepts that when we fail to take seriously the wrong that must be taken, we are condemning the act (Kolnai, 1973, p. 96). But forgiving is not condoning. To condone is to overlook a moral injury which should not be overlooked. One of the negative outcomes of Garrard and McNaughton ‘unconditional forgiveness’ is that one might be condoning if the wrongdoer has not met any reparative efforts (Griswold, 2007, p. 64). In their view, when the wrongdoer offers penance and repentance for forgiveness, the wrongdoer humble himself before the victim (Garrard & McNaughton, 2003, p. 47). But victim’s responsibility for the wrongful act is an issue here.

When the wrongdoer offers an apology, he is advised of the fact that he has harmed somebody, and his action is to be held accountable. It makes him aware of the fact that his action must not be overlooked. Also, as noted above, the victim’s resentment content that is justified, and to give up that resentment easily is to express that you ought to be treated in a bad way. The other reason that Garrard offers in defense for an unconditional forgiveness is ‘respect for persons and human solidarity’ (Garrard & McNaughton, 2003, pp. 52-53). But how does the notion of human solidarity is appealed here? When I express my resentment towards you, I still value you as a human, but I do express the thought that I as a person should not be harmed. This in no way affects the respect and the commonality between us. Garrard and McNaughton’s account does not offer a compelling explanation that solidarity and human respect are good reasons to overcome one’s resentment (Milam, 2018, p. 576).
CONCLUSION


REFERENCES