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FORGIVING THE MOTE IN YOUR SISTER'S EYE

ON STANDINGLESS FORGIVENESS

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen

MUCH RECENT philosophical exploration of the prerequisites of holding agents responsible has focused on the issue of standing to blame. In this article, I extend this exploration to a related, but in this respect uncharted, phenomenon: *forgiveness*. This topic lies downstream from wrongdoing and blame. Consider the following, typical sequence of events: wrongdoing occurs, the victim does (or does not) have standing to blame, they either blame or do not, we object if they blame while lacking standing (say, on the grounds that the blame is hypocritical), and eventually the relationship between wrongdoer and victim is (or is not) repaired through the victim's forgiveness of the wrongdoer. Many philosophers have examined either the act of blaming itself, or something relevant to the acquisition of standing to blame, to explain why we object that someone has no standing to blame. Here I argue that there is something that comes *after* blame for which our account of standing has implications. Specifically, I submit that one can lack standing to forgive in a way that is similar to the way one can lack standing to blame hypocritically even while abstaining from—perhaps even renouncing one's right to—blame altogether.¹

Consider: relationship therapists report that when partners are confronted with evidence of their infidelity they sometimes go on the offensive and start to blame those they have deceived for having been unjustifiably neglectful in ways that partly explain their affairs.² Sometimes there is something to the counter-accusation. Imagine you are the deceived party in one of these cases. And imagine that, after pointing a finger at your past blameworthy neglect, and without having addressed the issue of her own infidelity, your partner magnanimously states that she forgives you, suggesting that this is a suitable point at

- 1 I thank an anonymous reviewer for helpfully suggesting this way of framing of the arguments I present in this article.
- 2 Meyers, "Why Cheaters Blame Their Innocent Partners."

which to end the conversation and move on. Very probably, you would want to continue the conversation, pressing *your* points, even if you accept—and even if you *say* that you accept—that your past neglect was blameworthy. Would you accept the forgiveness being offered? Most of us would dismiss it as an offer your partner has no standing to make given that the wrong she has committed against you is much greater than your wrong. In this article, I want to support the idea that there is such a thing as (not) having the standing to forgive, and I shall try to make some sense of what is going on when people dismiss forgiveness *despite* conceding that they have wronged the other party in the way for which they are being offered forgiveness.

Broadly speaking, forgiveness can be dismissed in two ways.³ You *directly* dismiss it if you: deny that you did what you are being forgiven for; concede that you did it, but deny that it was wrongful; or, finally, concede that what you did was wrongful, but claim that you have a valid excuse for it. In my opening example none of these bases of direct dismissal capture your reason for dismissing the forgiveness of your past neglect. Your dismissal is *indirect*, because you are neither challenging the truth of the claim about blameworthiness that the forgiveness presupposes, nor challenging whether, in principle, your act is forgivable. Your dismissal is indirect, because what you are submitting is that, in virtue of facts about the forgiver, or the forgiver's relation to you, the forgiver has no standing (a notion I explain in section 2) to forgive you for your blameworthy action.

In this article, my focus is on indirect dismissals of forgiveness, and I explore these dismissals in the light of indirect dismissals of blame. Forgiving and blaming are closely connected—most obviously, because forgiving simply is ceasing to blame in the right way. Hence, if one lacks standing to blame, one also lacks standing to forgive. Or so I shall argue. Call this inference the *Simple Argument*. While the Simple Argument is one important thought underlying this article, it far from summarizes it. For instance, while the Simple Argument might make it reasonable to expect that the norms regulating blame regulate forgiveness as well, it does not establish this. Perhaps standingless forgiveness is morally wrongful for reasons other than standingless blame, or, unlike standingless blame, not wrongful at all.

In the recent literature on standing to blame, many philosophers argue that a hypocrite lacks standing to blame for an act even if that act is blameworthy, and that standingless hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* morally wrongful.⁴ I shall

3 See Cohen, *Finding Oneself in the Other*, 119.

4 Cohen, *Finding Oneself in the Other*, 115–42; Dworkin, “Morally Speaking,” 182–88; Fritz and Miller, “The Unique Badness of Hypocritical Blame,” “When Hypocrisy Undermines Standing to Blame,” and “Hypocrisy and Standing to Blame”; Herstein, “Understanding Standing”; Isserow and Klein, “Hypocrisy and Moral Authority”; McKiernan, “Standing Conditions and Blame”; Piovarchy “Situationism, Subjunctive Hypocrisy, and Standing to

defend analogous claims about forgiving: a forgiver can lack standing to forgive someone else for an act even if that act is forgivable (henceforth: the *Standinglessness Claim*); and standingless, hypocritical forgiveness—like that manifested in my opening example—is *pro tanto* morally wrongful (henceforth: the *Wrongness Claim*). I also try to defend the more cautious *Conditional Claim* that, for each of the two claims about lacking standing to blame, if that claim is true, then so is the corresponding claim about forgiveness, i.e., the Standinglessness Claim and the Wrongness Claim. As indicated, I am not aware of any previous discussions tying standing to forgive to standing to blame, though in the philosophical literature on forgiveness the question of whether standing to forgive a wrong requires one to be the victim of that wrong is familiar.⁵ This question is peripheral to my concerns.

Section 1 identifies the sense of the term “forgive” at stake in this article, and Section 2 defines the relevant notion of indirect dismissal of forgiveness. Section 3 defines hypocritical forgiveness and argues that the hypocritical forgiver lacks standing to forgive, thus supporting the Standinglessness Claim. Section 4 explains why the hypocrite’s standing to forgive is annulled. It appeals to the idea that hypocritical forgivers display insufficient, or deficient, commitment to the norms whose violation they are forgiving. Section 5 defends the Wrongness Claim, submitting that, like hypocritical blame, hypocritical forgiveness is wrongful because it involves relating to the recipient (person being forgiven) as an inferior. Section 6 concludes.

1. WHAT IS IT TO FORGIVE?

Forgiveness is a complex and varied phenomenon. However, my discussion examines the following communicative notion of forgiveness:

F (the forgiver) forgives *W* (the wrongdoer) for ϕ -ing if, and only, if:

1. *F* communicates to *W* that *F* believes that *W*’s ϕ -ing was blameworthy;

Blame” and “Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority”; Radzik, “On Minding Your Own Business”; Roadevin, “Hypocritical Blame, Fairness, and Standing”; Rossi, “The Commitment Account of Hypocrisy,” “Feeling Badly Is Not Good Enough”; Smith, “On Being Responsible and Holding Responsible”; Statman, “Why Disregarding Hypocritical Blame Is Appropriate”; Todd, “A Unified Account of the Moral Standing to Blame”; and Wallace, “Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons.”

5 Hughes and Warmke, “Forgiveness,” sec. 4; Piovarchy, “Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority,” 605; Russell, “The Who, the What, and the How of Forgiveness,” 2–3; Zaragoza, “Forgiveness and Standing,” 612–19. See also my discussion of condition 4 in section 1.

2. *F* communicates to *W* that, henceforth, *F* either releases *W* from some or all of the duties to *F* that *W* has acquired, by ϕ -ing, to respond to the blame for ϕ -ing from *F* (i.e., *F* exercises, and thereby renounces, her normative power to change wrongdoer norms), or renounces whatever liberty rights *F* has acquired against *W* to blame *W* for *W*'s ϕ -ing (i.e., *F* exercises, and thereby renounces, her normative power to change victim norms);⁶
3. The setting of *F*'s communicative act is of the right sort; and
4. *F* is either the victim of the wrongdoing or suitably related to the victim of the wrongdoing, and *W* is either the person who wronged *F* by ϕ -ing or suitably related to the wrongdoer.⁷

On this definition, to forgive is to perform a speech act.⁸ However, the extension of "forgiving" is broader than that. Specifically, there is a sense of forgiving where "forgiveness centrally concerns how you feel about the wrongdoer as a person."⁹ While one might never have communicated forgiveness to the person who has wronged one, one might have forgiven her in one's heart, i.e., one might completely "dissociate her wrongdoing from the way [one feels] about her."¹⁰ Conversely, one can perform the speech act of forgiving someone and nonetheless continue to resent one's wrongdoer for what she did.

This dual reference of "forgiving" explains why we can sometimes say, of those who have forgiven in the communicative sense, that they have forgiven insincerely. We mean that their thoughts about the wrongdoer are still very much shaped by her wrongdoing. Forgiving is an impure performative.¹¹ When you say "I forgive you," I can intelligibly have a skeptical thought: "You say you've forgiven me, but have you *really*?" Here I am exclusively interested in the pure performative sense of forgiving. By stipulation, the question "But did

- 6 See Nelkin, "Freedom and Forgiveness," 175–83; Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love*, 9–12; Riedener, "The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is," 185–87; Warmke, "The Normative Significance of Forgiveness," 688, 697–99; cf. Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean," 47–50.
- 7 Forgiving, in my sense, does not require any uptake by the recipient, but see Fricker, "What Is the Point of Blame?" 172; and Brunning and Milam, "Oppression, Forgiveness, and Ceasing to Blame," 15–57.
- 8 In the relevant terminology, my definition focuses on declarative speech acts of forgiving.
- 9 Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean," 49; Adams, "Forgiveness," 294; Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, 21.
- 10 Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean," 57; Brunning and Milam, "Oppression, Forgiveness, and Ceasing to Blame," 155.
- 11 Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 83–84; see also Warmke, "The Normative Significance of Forgiveness," 694–98.

she *really* forgive me?” makes no sense: you have uttered “I forgive you” (or something equivalent), and in the context we are in there is no room for doubt about whether, in the relevant speech act–focused sense, you have forgiven me. The development of an account of standingless speech acts of forgiving is important in itself. Perhaps certain aspects of forgiveness are specific to communicative forgiveness. And it is possible that the account will also cast light on standingless emotion-centered forgiveness.¹²

Before proceeding, let me speak specifically to each of conditions 1–4. Condition 1 implies that when you inform someone who appears to have wronged you that what they did was not wrong, or was excusable, you are not forgiving them, but doing something else. You are denying that blame was merited in the first place—in which case, there is no room for forgiving either.

Those who forgive will often have previously (emotionally or communicatively) blamed. However, they may never have got quite as far as blaming. They may have felt, merely, that they were ready to blame, or would be blaming at some point. On my analysis neither of these sequences identifies a necessary precursor of forgiveness. Condition 1 requires the forgiver to express a belief to the effect that the wrongdoer has acted in a *blameworthy* way and, thus, that she is *entitled* to blame the wrongdoer, not that she actually blames the wrongdoer. This makes sense, because, on the present account, what one does when one forgives is renounce the *right* to blame (see 2). Suppose that I have never blamed my partner for a certain wrong she committed against me, and that I realize she feels bad about what she did. Surely, I can forgive her despite my never having blamed her until now. In doing this I forgo any right to blame her at a later point in time. On the other hand, if I think I had no right to blame her, I am prevented from thinking that I can renounce such a right.

Condition 2 implies that, in forgiving, one must convey to the person one forgives that one believes she did something blameworthy, and that one believes one has the standing to blame her.¹³ One must convey that, in the absence of forgiveness, one would be entitled to continue, or to start, to blame and entitled to receive an uptake to one’s blame: “In expressing resentment or indignation to another person, you standardly demand that she acknowledge her fault to you, or more generally, that she enter an exchange with you that

12 Some argue that blame is “incipiently” communicative: Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint*, 120; Fricker, “What Is the Point of Blame?” 177–80; McKenna, *Conversation and Responsibility*, 176; Smith, “Moral Blame and Moral Protest,” 39; cf. Driver, “Private Blame”; Macnamara, “Taking Demands out of Blame,” 151–56. The same could be true of forgiveness; on communicative forgiveness, see Warmke, “The Normative Significance of Forgiveness,” 691.

13 Cf. Calhoun, “Changing One’s Heart,” 95; and Novitz, “Forgiveness and Self-Respect,” 309–11.

constitutes her being held accountable by you or her giving account to you.”¹⁴ If I utter “I forgive” while communicating that there is nothing to forgive, or that there is but I have no standing to forgive it, I am not really forgiving. Condition 2 also ensures that forgiving is not merely ceasing to blame.¹⁵ Forgiving is something one does, not something that merely happens to the forgiver, e.g., because she forgets all about the wrong in question or simply stops caring about it. This is trivially true of communicative forgiving, because to forgive in this sense involves performing a speech *act*.¹⁶

Finally, according to 2, forgiveness admits of degrees. This corresponds well with the way in which people actually forgive. In many cases, forgiveness is total, and the forgiver renounces any claim against, and any liberty rights in relation to, the wrongdoer's blameworthy action. However, forgiveness can be less than total. Thus it may be that I renounce the right to bring up your wrong as a conversational matter and start blaming you at will, but do not renounce the right to blame you again should you start blaming me for a similar wrong that I commit against a third party.

According to 3, the setting of the communicative act has to be of the right sort. Quite what that means is a complex issue that we can ignore for present purposes. However, to see the need for this qualification, suppose that I utter “I forgive you” to my wrongdoer while she points a gun to my head threateningly, leaving me in no doubt as to what will happen if I do not “forgive” her. Certainly, I have performed the locutionary act of uttering a string of words people often utter when they forgive, but given the coercion my utterance does not have the illocutionary force of forgiveness.

Condition 4 places a limit on who can perform an act of forgiving. Third parties can blame someone for their wrongdoing. Wrongdoers can blame themselves for their own wrongdoing. However, only the *victims* of the wrongdoing—or, as my definition allows, those suitably related to the victims of the

14 Riedener, “The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is,” 186–87.

15 See Allais, “Wiping the Slate Clean,” 43–44; Brunning and Milam, “Oppression, Forgiveness, and Ceasing to Blame,” 146; Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 530; Milam, “Reasons to Forgive,” 243; Murphy, “Forgiveness and Resentment,” 506; Pettigrove, *Forgiveness and Love*, 4, 97. Similarly, to refuse to forgive is essentially to continue to insist on the right to blame and on the duty of the blameworthy party to respond to the blame (Radzik, “On Minding Your Own Business,” 583).

16 But something similar is also true of forgiving understood as an emotion. As Hieronymi points out: to swallow a pill that erases blame (as an emotion) is not to forgive in an emotion-focused sense (“Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 530). Swallowing a pill that makes one perform an act meeting conditions 1–4—assuming that 3 does not rule out this possibility on the ground that swallowing a pill means that the setting is not right—counts as forgiving.

wrongdoing—can forgive a wrongdoer.¹⁷ They can forgive the wrongdoer, moreover, and not just anyone who is somehow (thinly) related to her.¹⁸ As Linda Radzik puts it,

the ability to grant or withhold forgiveness requires a special kind of standing. Some argue that only the victims of the wrong, and perhaps their close loved ones, have such standing. An employee who has been cheated by the boss can forgive, but the other co-workers are in no position to do so. Others grant that some non-victims can also have the standing to forgive or refuse to forgive, but only in virtue of a special need for support on behalf of the victim or a special obligation or relationship that the third party holds to either the victim or the wrongdoer.¹⁹

2. DISMISSING FORGIVENESS AS STANDINGLESS

Applying the notion of communicative forgiveness introduced in the previous section, I propose the following account of what it is to indirectly dismiss forgiveness as something the forgiver lacks standing to give:

Disjunctive View of Indirectly Dismissing Forgiveness: *W* indirectly dismisses *F*'s forgiveness for *W*'s ϕ -ing on grounds of lack of standing if and only if:

5. *W* denies that she has any duties to *F*, as a result of ϕ -ing, to respond to *F*'s blaming of her for ϕ -ing, that *F* can free her from, or
6. *W* denies that *F* has acquired any of the liberty rights against *W* to blame *W* for ϕ -ing that *F* can renounce.²⁰

¹⁷ See Chaplin, "Taking It Personally."

¹⁸ Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment," 506. If one can wrong oneself, then one can forgive oneself in the same ways that one can forgive others. This is not to deny that one can forgive oneself for wronging others, but when one does so, one does it in a sense different from that in which one forgives others for wronging oneself. Self-forgiveness, like self-blame (see Shoemaker, "The Trials and Tribulations of Tom Brady"; and Tierney, "Hypercrysis and Standing to Self-Blame"), raises interesting and complex issues of its own and I shall largely set it aside here.

¹⁹ Radzik, "On Minding Your Own Business," 582; Griswold, *Forgiveness*, 117; but see Pettigrove, "The Standing to Forgive," esp. 593–95; Walker, "Third Parties and the Scaffolding of Forgiveness," 495.

²⁰ The rights and duties in question are conversational. Such rights and duties are different from, because less stringent than, say, the right to life and liberty and duties not to kill or enslave. Thus, while they can permissibly be enforced by silencing, or ignoring, others' utterances, they cannot be enforced with lethal force. However, this—unlike the normative structure that rights discourse imposes—is not important for present purposes.

On the disjunctive view, then, to indirectly dismiss forgiveness is to repudiate a claim that the communicative act of forgiving presupposes in virtue of 2. This is the claim that the recipient of the forgiveness has a duty, to the forgiver, to provide uptake to the forgiver's acts of blaming should she engage in such acts, or that the forgiver holds a liberty right against the recipient to blame her.²¹ Accordingly, in indirectly dismissing forgiveness the intended recipient of the forgiveness claims, in effect, that the act of forgiving has misfired—the speaker's utterance is meant to have the illocutionary force of an act of forgiveness, but it fails to do so because condition 2 is not satisfied. The condition is unsatisfied because the speaker has neither a liberty right to blame nor a claim right to an uptake to her blame.²² Accordingly, the forgiver lacks the moral authority to forgive required (as my definition of communicative forgiveness makes plain) by forgiveness. This is not to deny that unsuccessful acts of forgiveness involve uttering the same words—performing the same locutionary acts—as those uttered in otherwise similar felicitous acts of forgiveness. Nor is it to deny that to forgive one must represent oneself as having the normative authority that, according to 2, communicative forgiveness requires.²³ Indirectly, dismissible forgiveness is in many ways like an act of consenting on behalf of someone else. In the absence of special precursors, such as delegation, one does not have the normative authority to consent on another's behalf. Hence, even if one performs the same locutionary act as that involved in the corresponding felicitous illocutionary act of consenting, one still fails to consent in the relevant sense.²⁴ Nor, finally, does my account imply that an agent who engages in an act of infelicitous forgiveness has not wholeheartedly formed an intention to put her negative reactive attitudes to the wrongdoer behind her.

The disjunctive view has three important implications. First, it implies that when one dismisses forgiveness indirectly, one brackets the question of whether the act for which one is being offered forgiveness was blameworthy and simply denies that the forgiver has the standing to blame in the way that her forgiveness presupposes. Second, in principle indirectly dismissing forgiveness can be a rather unemotional activity. In particular, in indirect dismissals, the potential recipient of the forgiveness need not be implying that the forgiver morally ought not, all things considered, to forgive. Indeed, consistently with the disjunctive view, the standingless forgiver might be morally required to offer forgiveness (standingless forgiveness, and thus infelicitous or merely apparent—a qualification I

21 Duff, "Blame, Moral Standing and the Legitimacy of the Criminal Trial," 129, and "Responsibility and Reciprocity," 780–85.

22 Compare Lippert-Rasmussen, "Praising without Standing," 5–7.

23 See Riedener, "The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is," 193, 195–96, 199–200.

24 Piovarchy, "Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority," 611.

take as read in my next two points) because the offer of forgiveness will turn the forgiver into an apparent moral exemplar capable of serving as an inspiration to many others. Likewise, consistently with the disjunctive account, there could be situations in which someone ought to accept forgiveness even though there is no wrong needing to be forgiven. Similarly, there may be situations in which a wrongdoer should accept forgiveness even though the forgiver is not the victim of wrongdoing and thus not the person with standing to forgive. This might be the case, for example, because the wrongdoer's self-blame is driving her toward suicide; only forgiveness from the person she falsely believes to be the victim of her wrong will prevent her from going down that route. Third, the present account is silent on whether forgiveness that fails to satisfy condition 2 is morally objectionable. Specifically, it is consistent with the possibility that an infelicitous attempt to forgive (i.e., an act that purports and was meant to be an act of forgiveness but is not) is *pro tanto* morally wrongful because, say, the speaker has culpably represented herself as possessing a certain normative authority that she in fact lacks.

3. HYPOCRITICAL FORGIVING

Against this conceptual background, I will now ask: Can forgiveness be hypocritical? If it can, can the hypocritical forgiveness be appropriately dismissed, indirectly, as standingless? There is a natural way of understanding these questions. When someone mentions "hypocritical forgiveness," the sort of case likely to spring to mind is one where someone, Tartuffe style, pretends to forgive, conscious that, at heart, she will continue to nurse a grudge while aiming to appear magnanimous.²⁵ This is *not* the sort of hypocritical forgiveness I have in mind. Rather, the sort of hypocritical forgiveness I shall examine is the following:

F hypocritically forgives *W* for ϕ -ing, if and only if:

7. *F* attempts to forgive (in the communicative sense defined in section 1) *W* for ϕ -ing;
8. *F* believes, or should believe, that there are others such that she herself has done (or would have done) things to them that are both relevantly similar to ϕ -ing and contextually relevant;²⁶

25 Crisp and Cowton, "Hypocrisy and Moral Seriousness," 343–44; see also section 2.

26 Condition 8 implies that, in cases of hypocritical forgiveness, *F* need not believe that she has ϕ -ed in a way that wronged *W*. It suffices that *F* believes that *F* has done similar wrongs to someone, and that she does not think she has any reason to hope for forgiveness from others for these wrongs, and actually does not even see them as wrongs. What, according

9. Non-coincidentally, *F* does not suitably make herself, or accept herself being made, the target of forgiveness from others for *her* own conduct that is relevantly similar to ϕ -ing; or
10. *F* (a) does not believe there are morally relevant differences between *W*'s conduct and her own putatively similar ϕ -ing of the kind that justify her forgiving *W* while not making herself, or accepting herself being made, the target of others' forgiveness, nor does *F* (b) have a belief to this effect for reasons she can, or should be able to, see are not sufficient reasons.

This definition successfully captures a range of cases in which we would naturally consider the forgiveness hypocritical but for reasons other than the deception involved in the Tartuffe case. Indeed, given the definition, Tartuffe-style forgiveness may qualify as non-hypocritical forgiveness if the Tartuffe forgiver publicly and proportionately blames herself for her greater wrong while publicly forgiving the lesser wrongdoer, though at heart she has no regrets about her own greater wrong whatsoever and continues to resent the lesser wrongdoer.

Condition 7 reflects the fact that, trivially, to forgive hypocritically one has to attempt to forgive in the relevant communicative sense. Conditions 8 and 9 provide the meat of the explanation of why *F*'s forgiveness is hypocritical. Their satisfaction means that *F* fails to recognize that *W* has a right to blame *F*, and hence a right to renounce blaming *F*, with a foundation no less solid than *F*'s own putative right to blame *W*. Hence, *F* does not have the moral authority over *W* that forgiveness requires. The "would have done" in condition 8 allows for counterfactual hypocrisy. Thus, I might blame someone for something I have not done myself while also knowing that I would have done the same thing myself had I been in that person's situation.²⁷ Roughly speaking, condition 8 is informed by this thought: the fact that *F* has done (or would have done under relevant hypothetical circumstances) something relevantly similar to *W* undermines *F*'s right to blame *W* and demand uptake of that blame by *W*.

The purpose of conditions 9 and 10 is to exclude certain cases of hypocritical forgiveness—cases, that is, involving mere incoherence, and cases involving an assumed moral difference between one's own act of forgiveness and that

8, *F* has to believe is that she has performed a certain action, and that, whether she believes this or not, the action is both relevantly similar to ϕ -ing and contextually relevant. *F* need not believe that she has performed an action under that description.

27 Piovarchy, "Situationism, Subjunctive Hypocrisy, and Standing to Blame."

of others who satisfy conditions 7 and 8.²⁸ Condition 9 is designed to rule out cases where *F* is simply incoherent and we are dealing with what we might describe as a merely incoherent forgiver. This forgiver might have as readily ended up (and with a suitable frequency does end up) blaming herself for ϕ -ing while not blaming *W* for doing similar things to her, so it is sheer coincidence that, in this case, she ends up forgiving her victim for, say, a minor wrong committed against her while failing to see that she is a potential recipient of even more magnanimous forgiveness from the victim for her own greater wrongdoing. While such a forgiver could display various vices—incoherence, for a start—hypocrisy is not among these.²⁹ Accordingly, in forgiving her wrongdoer such a person might not engage in an act of (wrongful) hypocritical forgiveness.³⁰ A forgiver who satisfies 9 is one who does not see that she herself is an appropriate target of (more severe) blame by those she has wronged. For that reason, the normative relation between her and the person she forgives is relevantly similar to the normative relation that exists between the person she has wronged and herself. One indication that condition 9 is satisfied is that the hypocritical forgiver sees herself as magnanimous when she forgives the person she has wronged but does not see that this person—her own victim—would manifest even greater magnanimity if they were to forgive her for her greater wrong. The hypocritical forgiver might, in these circumstances, take herself to be entitled to the other's forgiveness, or simply think the other's forgiveness is not needed to repair her damaged relation to her victim.

The purpose of 10 is to exclude foreseeable defeaters of hypocrisy. It says that *F* is warranted in believing that there is a morally relevant difference

28 Conditions 9 and 10 should align with one's views about what undermines standing to blame. Different theorists might want to tweak them so that they fit their own views on this matter. I suspect Todd ("A Unified Account of the Moral Standing to Blame") would want to revise the conditions so they handle cases in which a forgiver's conduct does not manifest lack of commitment to the norm for a violation of which the forgiveness is being offered (see section 4). Rather differently, Fritz and Miller ("Hypocrisy and the Standing to Blame") might wish to adjust the conditions to handle cases in which the forgiveness at issue manifests a differential blaming position. I think 9 and 10 are capable of being developed in these ways, and that for present purposes we can set aside questions about what exactly would be required to deliver the sought-after alignments.

29 Fritz and Miller, "Hypocrisy and the Standing to Blame," 122.

30 I am assuming here that hypocrisy cannot be a wholly objective matter. Specifically, I believe that someone who forgives hypocritically must *either* have certain attitudes (e.g., the attitude of not seeing one's own wrongdoing as something that renders one a suitable target of blame and forgiveness from one's victim) *or* be in a position such that she ought to have seen that having attitudes of this kind is appropriate and that the reason why she nevertheless does not have this attitude is some kind of exception seeking in her own favor (cf. Piovarchy, "Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority," 618–20).

(located in the differential effects of forgiveness, for example) between her own forgiving of *W* and *W*'s forgiving of her that morally justifies her act of forgiving and justifies her, again morally, in not accepting forgiveness from *W*. Suppose, for instance, that *F* forgives *W* because *W* is psychologically fragile and consumed by guilt, whereas *F* is robust enough to live with a powerful sense of guilt. If *that* is *F*'s sole reason for forgiving *W*, while not considering herself an appropriate recipient of forgiveness, clearly *F* is not manifesting the vice of hypocrisy.³¹

In my view, hypocritical forgiving, as I have defined it, can be rightly dismissed as standingless. In support of this view I offer, first, a case of political hypocrisy, in addition to the example involving forgiveness for infidelity offered in the introduction:

Dresden: Suppose that, in contrast to what actually happened, in the years after World War II the German state never apologized for Nazi atrocities but simply ignored the horrors inflicted on hundreds of millions by Hitler's regime. Suppose, with this as the background, that at a prominently staged fiftieth anniversary ceremony in Dresden town hall, counting among its invitees the Israeli ambassador, the German state through its representatives officially forgives the Allies for the militarily largely pointless terror bombing of Dresden in the final months of World War II—bombing that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent German civilians.

Plausibly, the invitees, as the intended recipients of this forgiveness, are in a position to dismiss it as hypocritical even if they concede that the terror bombing of Dresden was blameworthy. Conditions 7–10 seem to be satisfied, 7 trivially so. Condition 8 is satisfied because the German state and its representatives know, or should know, that if the terror bombing in question was wrong, the Holocaust was a much greater wrong, and a relevant one, too, given the overall context of the Dresden attack and the invitees. On account of the systematic failure to address the wrongs of the Holocaust, 9 is satisfied in Dresden. And 10

31 One might motivate 9 and 10 by appealing to Piovarchy's analysis of lack of standing. Neither the merely inconsistent forgiver nor the forgiver who thinks there is a morally relevant difference between the wrong committed against her by the recipient of her forgiveness and the (greater) wrong the forgiver has committed against the recipient of her forgiveness makes—or thinks she is entitled to make—"a second-personal demand on others, while failing to accept the authority of others to make the same kind of second-personal demand on them" (Piovarchy, "Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority," 614). Both accept that others have the relevant authority, but they simply fail to notice it—in the former case as the result of a benign oversight and in the latter as the result of a mistaken belief that there are reasons to exercise that authority in the forgiver's case but not in the case of those who have wronged the forgiver.

we can assume to be satisfied, because the reason for the discrepancy between what the German state is forgiving and what it seeks forgiveness for, in connection with Dresden, are wholly explained by its own reluctance to face up to its own wrongdoing.

Having brought out the intuitive plausibility of the view that hypocritical forgiveness is standingless, I want now to offer a separate argument for the view:

11. If F has standing to forgive W for ϕ -ing, then F has standing to renounce a liberty right against W to blame W for ϕ -ing or standing to renounce a claim right against W that W provides uptake to F 's blaming W for ϕ -ing.
12. If F has either standing to renounce a liberty right against W to blame W for ϕ -ing or standing to renounce a claim right against W that W provides uptake to F 's blaming W for ϕ -ing, then F either has a liberty right against W to blame W for ϕ -ing or a claim right against W that W provides uptake to F 's blaming W for ϕ -ing.
13. If F has either a liberty right against W to blame W for ϕ -ing or a claim right against W that W provides an uptake to F 's blaming W for ϕ -ing, then F has standing to blame W for ϕ -ing.
14. So, if F has standing to forgive W for ϕ -ing, then F has standing to blame W for ϕ -ing.

This argument is clearly valid, since 11–13 are three linked conditionals and its conclusion is a conditional with the antecedent of 11 as its antecedent and the consequent of 13 as its consequent. Hence, the crucial question is whether the premises are true. Arguably, 11 follows relatively straightforwardly from 2 in my definition setting out what communicative forgiveness is, i.e., the claim that: F communicates to W that, henceforth, F either releases W from some or all of the duties to F that W has acquired, by ϕ -ing, to respond to the blame for ϕ -ing from F ...; or renounces whatever liberty rights F has acquired against W to blame W for W 's ϕ -ing. And 12 strikes me as a conceptual truth. One cannot have the standing to renounce a right unless one has that right. Finally, 13 is a plausible account of what it is for F to have standing to blame W (in a communicative sense) for ϕ -ing: surely, here, either F has a liberty right against W to blame W for ϕ -ing or W has a duty to F to provide an uptake to F 's blaming W for ϕ -ing.³² One reason why this account of standing to blame is attractive is

32 Compare Lippert-Rasmussen, "Praising without Standing," 5–7. Not everyone accepts that there is something like standing to blame (Bell, "The Standing to Blame"; Dover, "The Walk and the Talk"; King, "Skepticism about the Standing to Blame"). For reasons of space here I am simply relying on the assumption that skepticism about standing to blame can

that when people dismiss someone as not having the standing to blame they need not be claiming that the person should not (morally) engage in blaming. After all, standingless blame (like standingless forgiveness) may be morally justified in virtue of its good consequences.

These, then, are my arguments for the claim that forgiveness can be standingless. While the first, intuitive argument, appealing to Dresden (or for that matter, the opening example of the cheating forgiver), carries greater weight for me, I think the second definition-based argument is also forceful.

4. WHAT UNDERMINES STANDING TO FORGIVE?

If hypocritical forgiveness is standingless, what is it about the hypocrite that undermines her standing to forgive? I think the answer to this question is the following:

Commitment Account: What deprives the hypocrite of her standing to forgive others is the fact that she is not genuinely committed to the norm that her forgiveness presupposes.³³

This account—which is meant to mirror the intuition shared by several theorists who regard commitment to a norm as necessary for standing to blame while not corresponding to any specific fleshing out of that intuition—explicates the two examples of hypocritical forgiveness I have presented in a satisfying way. Through her unwillingness to address her own infidelity, and even more vividly through her affair itself, the cheating partner manifests a lack of commitment to the norm on which her forgiveness is based, i.e.,

be defeated. Skeptics about standing to blame are invited to assess the argument above as one that shows what would follow, as regards standing to forgive, if there were such a thing as standing to blame.

33 Theorists who have defended a commitment account of hypocritical blame include Crisp and Cowton, "Hypocrisy and Moral Seriousness"; Friedman, "How to Blame People Responsibly," esp. 274–75, 276–77, 282; Riedener, "The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is"; Rossi, "The Commitment Account of Hypocrisy" and "Feeling Badly Is Not Good Enough"; and Todd, "A Unified Account of the Moral Standing to Blame." Riedener argues that it is a constitutive rule of blaming that you "don't have the authority to blame someone in light of a norm if you don't take it seriously yourself," submitting that taking the norm seriously is exactly what the hypocritical blamer does not do ("The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is," 196). Perhaps a similar analysis applies no less well to hypocritical forgiveness: that is, it is a constitutive rule of forgiving that you do not have authority to forgive someone for a violation of a particular norm unless you take it seriously, and you do not do the latter when you fail to acknowledge that your similar, or more serious, violation of the very same norm makes you someone who is also a potential, and perhaps more appropriate, target of (blame and) forgiveness.

essentially, the norm that spouses should not deceive each other and ought to support one another emotionally. Similarly, the imagined German state in the Dresden case shows a lack of principled commitment to the norm of not killing civilians. It fails to apply the norm in a case where this would reflect badly on Germany.

In other cases, however, the commitment account seems to deliver the wrong answers. In passing—light heartedly, but not hypocritically—I might forgive someone. It is fairly obvious that I care little about the wrong committed against me, and that I think of the forgiveness in a rather business-like way. Possibly, I forgive in a way manifesting no greater commitment to the norm at issue than a hypocritical forgiver does, with the difference that the latter is seriously upset about another's violation of the norm. Yet, it would seem odd to say that my standing to forgive is undermined. A case such as this seems to be a counterexample to the commitment account.

This challenge can be met by specifying the lack of commitment that undermines standing to forgive more precisely.³⁴ Thus, it might be suggested that one is committed to a norm in the relevant, objective sense if and only if one has always complied with the norm (or complied with it to a sufficiently high degree). On this understanding of commitment, the forgiver in the previous paragraph might be fully committed to the norm they forgive another person for violating. I suspect that this notion of commitment is far too crude. In many cases compliance with a norm is a good indicator of commitment, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient for the commitment. That it is not necessary emerges, for instance, in Friedman's acknowledgement that the weak-willed hypocrite is "fully committed to" the norm she violates.³⁵ That it is not sufficient is shown by the subjunctive, hypocritical blamer (or forgiver). This individual has been fortunate enough never to violate a particular norm, perhaps because she has never been in a situation where she would gain from its violation. However, had such an occasion arisen, she would have flouted the norm—indeed, she presently desires to do just that should an occasion arise—to whatever extent her self-interest dictated. This individual surely lacks commitment to the norm in question.³⁶ Plausibly, blame and forgiveness from such an agent can sometimes be dismissed as hypocritical.

34 Perhaps only lack of commitment biased in one's own favor, or in favor of those whom one somehow sympathizes with, undermines standing.

35 Friedman, "How to Blame People Responsibly," 281.

36 Piovarchy, "Hypocrisy, Standing to Blame and Second-Personal Authority," 619. Cf. "I will not attempt fully to analyze the sort of commitment at issue; however, it consists, minimally, in endorsement of the value as a genuine value, together with at least some degree of motivation to act in accordance with the value" (Todd, "A Unified Account of the Moral Standing to Blame," 355).

My own response to the present challenge is rather different. I wish to stress two things. First, if the present counterexample works against the commitment account, it also works against an analogous commitment account of standing to blame. Hence, it supports the Conditional Claim, i.e., the claim that for each of the Standingless Claim and the Wrongness Claim (about blame), if that claim is true, then so is the corresponding claim about forgiveness. If the commitment accounts are to be rejected both in relation to blame and in relation to forgiveness, that is some reason to think that hypocrisy might not undermine standing. At any rate, plainly, we will have stronger reason to think that hypocrisy *does* undermine standing if we can explain what it is about hypocrisy that undermines standing—whether to blame or to forgive. Second, if counterexamples of the kind I sketched above successfully defeat the commitment account, we will need an alternative explanation of what it is about the hypocrite that undermines her standing to forgive. The literature on standing to blame suggests that a widely supported candidate would be:

Moral Equality Account: What deprives the hypocrite of her standing to forgive others is the fact that, in virtue of her hypocritical forgiveness, she denies or violate the moral equality of persons.³⁷

The animating idea here is that hypocritical forgivers deny, or violate, the moral equality of persons because they see themselves as being in a position to blame others for minor wrongs even though they themselves have committed greater wrongs against others and fail to acknowledge those greater wrongs.

Unfortunately, this account is defeated by the case of the *hypercritical* forgiver. The hypercritical forgiver finds it very difficult to forgive herself, but very easy to forgive others. If this person treats anyone as an inferior, thereby implicitly denying, or violating, moral equality, presumably it is herself.³⁸ Yet, when she forgives others, they cannot dismiss her forgiveness as standingless in the light of her failure to treat herself as an equal in relation to her acts of forgiveness.

The obvious response to this objection is to embrace something like the following modification of the moral equality account:

Anti-Superiority Account: What deprives the forgiver of her standing to forgive others is the fact that, in virtue of her hypocritical forgiveness, she affirms her moral superiority over other persons.³⁹

37 Fritz and Miller, "Hypocrisy and the Standing to Blame," 125; Wallace, "Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons," 328, 335; but see Riedener, "The Standing to Blame, or Why Moral Disapproval Is What It Is," 191.

38 Cf. Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment," 505.

39 Cf. Lippert-Rasmussen, "Praising without Standing," 669.

On this account, plainly, the hypocritical forgiver retains her standing to forgive. She does not affirm her moral superiority over others—far from it. Ultimately, however, the anti-superiority account is flawed, and this drives us back to the commitment account (assuming we started there). Consider two aristocrats, both of whom think that, in a wide range of cases, aristocrats should forgive wrongs done to them by other aristocrats but almost never forgive wrongs committed against them by commoners. Both, then, affirm superiority over the commoners. Suppose now that both aristocrats forgive a commoner who has committed the same minor wrong against each of them. And assume that the first aristocrat has not committed any wrongs against the commoner she is forgiving, while the second has committed much greater wrongs against the commoner than those she is forgiving. On the anti-superiority account, both commoners can indirectly dismiss the forgiveness they are being offered, since both aristocrats affirm their superior moral status relative to the commoners.⁴⁰ However, in addition to this the second commoner can legitimately claim that, because the aristocrat has wronged her to a much greater degree, she is in no position to allocate the blame in the first place, and thus in no position to forgive. Hence, what undermines the second aristocrat's position to forgive is not her denial of moral equality, but the fact that she has committed greater wrongs against the recipient of her forgiveness.

I accept that some will take issue with this objection to the anti-superiority account, and, for that matter, with my previous objection to the moral equality account. Even they, however, should accept that what undermines the standing to blame—be that a denial of moral equality or an affirmation of one's own superiority—can be present in the case of forgiveness as well. Once this is accepted, it is hard to see how friends of the moral equality, or the anti-superiority, account of standing to blame could deny that there is such a thing as lacking the standing to forgive. If this is granted, we have strong support for the Standinglessness Claim (see introduction). This claim is true whichever of the three accounts of standing to blame I have discussed in this section is correct.

40 Lippert-Rasmussen, "Why the Moral Equality Account of the Hypocrite's Lack of Standing to Blame Fails," 669–72. It might be objected that while both aristocrats affirm their own superiority explicitly, only one of them does so implicitly through her pattern of forgiveness. In reply, I must say that I fail to see how what one affirms, or denies, implicitly can undermine one's standing to perform certain acts if, when one says that very same thing explicitly (perhaps at the very moment one forgives), that does not undermine one's standing.

5. THE WRONGFULNESS OF HYPOCRITICAL FORGIVENESS

Let me now turn to the question of what makes hypocritical forgiveness wrongful. I want to defend two claims: that if hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful, then so is hypocritical forgiveness; and that hypocritical forgiveness is *pro tanto* wrongful. I defend these two claims by scrutinizing four accounts of why hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful.

In the previous section I considered the moral equality account of standing to forgive and to blame. On my conception of standing, the mere fact that your forgiveness is standingless does not in itself show that it is *pro tanto* wrongful. However, Fritz and Miller and Wallace all seem to take their accounts of why hypocritical blame is standingless to also be accounts of why hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful:⁴¹

Moral Equality Account of the Wrongfulness of Hypocritical Blame (or Forgiveness): Hypocritical blaming (or forgiving) is *pro tanto* wrongful because it involves the blamer's (or forgiver's) denying the moral equality of the addressee (or recipient) or treating this person as if she is not a moral equal.⁴²

If this is the correct account of hypocritical blame, the analogous, parenthesized account of the *pro tanto* wrongfulness of hypocritical forgiveness is also correct. After all, on my account a hypocritical forgiver is involved in hypocritical blame (or, at least, must believe themselves to be entitled to blame where, as a matter of fact, such blame would be hypocritical). I think the moral equality account of the wrongfulness of hypocritical forgiveness captures a crucial element of what is intuitively objectionable about hypocritical forgiveness. For, intuitively, what is objectionable about the deceitful partner's forgiveness is the way in which she relates to her partner as someone whose entitlements, in relation to holding each other accountable, are lesser than her own, and that way of relating to others is built into hypocritical forgiveness by definition.⁴³

41 Fritz and Miller, "Hypocrisy and the Standing to Blame," 122; and Wallace, "Hypocrisy, Moral Address, and the Equal Standing of Persons," 332.

42 Because Fritz and Miller propose an account of the wrongness of hypocritical blame only, the "(or Forgiveness)" represents an extension of their account. A similar point applies to the other instances of "(or Forgiveness)" and other parenthesized instances of "forgive" or derivatives of "forgive" in the accounts introduced in this section.

The formulation of the account here accommodates the intuition that the hypercritical blamer (or forgiver) does not act in a *pro tanto* wrongful way because she does not relate to others as a superior.

43 This is part of what makes the forgiveness in the imagined Dresden case intuitively objectionable, though other factors might be at play here as well.

Not everyone accepts the moral equality account of the wrongfulness of hypocritical blame, so let us consider three other accounts and ask how they apply to hypocritical forgiveness. In a recent article, Isserow and Klein suggest:

Desert Account of the Wrongfulness of Hypocritical Blame (or Forgiveness): Hypocritical blaming (or forgiving) is *pro tanto* wrongful because it involves doing something to acquire (or actually acquiring) more esteem in the eyes of others than one deserves in a context where attributions of faults and virtues are typically tied to comparative esteem.⁴⁴

If this account is correct, the equivalent explanation of hypocritical forgiveness is also correct. After all, alongside forgiving another's minor fault the hypocritical forgiver omits to address her own faults in a way that seems to involve trying to acquire, or actually acquiring, more esteem than she merits: that acquisition is the upshot of her avoidance of deserved blame. Also, by actively conveying a false impression of magnanimity the hypocritical claimer lays claim to undeserved esteem.

It might be objected that in *some* cases avoiding having one's esteem lowered in deserved ways, or having one's esteem boosted in undeserved ways, will move one closer to possession of the amount of esteem that one deserves. It will do so, for example, if, for other reasons, one's level of actual esteem diverges from one's level of deserved esteem. In my view, this objection might well defeat the desert account. However, in the present context I need only note that assessments of the objection will be symmetrical across the desert account of moral wrongfulness of hypocritical blame and the desert account of moral wrongfulness of hypocritical forgiveness—they will apply as powerfully, or feebly, to both.

It can also be objected that, implausibly, the desert account seems to imply that forgiveness is *pro tanto* wrongful. After all, part of what one does when one forgives is renouncing one's right to blame the wrongdoer in a way that this person actually deserves. Hence, if the forgiver acts in accordance with this renouncement, the wrongdoer receives less blame than she deserves, and therefore, probably, more esteem than she deserves. However, my account of what forgiveness involves does not speak to the issue of esteem. It is compatible

44 Isserow and Klein, "Hypocrisy and Moral Authority," 209. The context qualification is not one that Isserow and Klein themselves suggest. However, it seems that without (and perhaps even with) this restriction, their account is overinclusive. They note that since "an agent can undermine their moral authority in many ways, [their own] account construes hypocrisy as multiply realizable" (Isserow and Klein, "Hypocrisy and Moral Authority," 193). I would add that, similarly, the undermining of one's moral authority is similarly multiply realizable, and that hypocrisy is just one way in which it can be realized—as, in effect, acknowledged by Isserow and Klein, "Hypocrisy and Moral Authority," 205–6.

with it that someone who is forgiven for her wrongs should have the esteem she has in the eyes of others lowered in proportion to the wrong despite the forgiveness. Hence, even if the empirical conjecture involved in the present challenge is correct, it would not challenge the desert account.

Third, in a recent article Cristina Roadevin defends:

Reciprocity Account of Hypocritical Blame (or Forgiveness): Hypocritical blaming (or forgiving) is *pro tanto* wrongful because it involves a failure to reciprocate to the recipient of blame (or forgiveness) on the part of the blamer (or forgiver), i.e., the blamer (or forgiver) demands something from the recipient while rejecting a relevantly similar demand from her.⁴⁵

Hypocritically forgiving someone who has wronged you while displaying disproportionately little attention to your own similar, or greater, wrongs against the recipient of your forgiveness amounts to a failure of reciprocity relevantly like that involved in hypocritical blame. One expects others to take one's own complaints against their wrongful actions seriously by accepting one's forgiveness (thereby acknowledging one's entitlement to blame), yet does not honor the expectation that one will take the similar or greater complaints of others seriously, e.g., by apologizing and asking for forgiveness. Hence, from the perspective of reciprocity, hypocritical forgiveness and blame are wrongful on exactly the same grounds.

Consider, finally, a view defended by Thomas Scanlon:

Falsehood Account of Hypocritical Blaming: Hypocritical blaming is *pro tanto* wrongful because it involves the suggestion of a false claim, i.e., the claim that the blamer's and blamee's moral relationship is impaired as a result of the blamee's, not the blamer's, faults.⁴⁶

This account can readily be generalized to cover hypocritical forgiveness:

Falsehood Account of Hypocritical Forgiving: Hypocritical forgiving is *pro tanto* wrongful because it involves the suggestion of a false claim, i.e., the claim that the forgiver's and the recipient of forgiveness's moral relationship is impaired as a result of the recipient's, not the forgiver's, faults, and is now partly, or fully, repaired as a result of the forgiver's (hypocritical) forgiveness.

Again, I am not championing falsehood accounts of the wrongfulness of hypocritical blame or forgiveness. I am simply contending that the suggestion of

45 Roadevin, "Hypocritical Blame, Fairness, and Standing," 137; cf. Duff, "Responsibility and Reciprocity," esp. 780–85.

46 Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions*, 122–23, 128–29.

a false claim about what modifies the relation between the involved parties is as involved, or implicit, in cases of hypocritical forgiveness as it is in cases of hypocritical blame. The deceitful partner's forgiveness suggests that she is the party with legitimate cause to withhold goodwill and trust from her deceived partner, and therefore the one with discretion to either restore or not restore their relationship. So, if the false suggestion is wrongful in the case of hypocritical blame, the same seems true when hypocritical forgiveness is at issue.

I have now supported the Wrongness Claim—the claim that hypocritical forgiving is *pro tanto* wrongful. Such forgiving is wrongful, I have argued, because it denies the moral equality of the recipient or treats her as if she is a moral equal. I have also supported the conditional claim that if hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful, then so is hypocritical forgiveness. I have pointed out that several familiar accounts of the wrongfulness of hypocritical blame imply that, likewise, hypocritical forgiveness is also wrongful. Admittedly, this does not show that no account of the wrongfulness of hypocritical blame could imply that while hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful, hypocritical forgiving is not, but it does confer a degree of robustness on my conditional claim about the Wrongness Claim.

6. CONCLUSION

If the arguments in this article are sound, one can lack the standing to forgive in ways that would be hypocritical in the way I have described; certainly one can do so if, as many philosophers think, one can lack the standing to blame in this way. Hypocritical forgiveness is *pro tanto* wrongful because, like hypocritical blame, it involves denying moral equality or treating the addressee as if she is not a moral equal.⁴⁷ At any rate, if hypocritical blame is *pro tanto* wrongful for that reason, then so is hypocritical forgiveness.⁴⁸

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47 Recall that I have discussed two anti-superiority accounts: one of what undermines the standing of the hypocrite to forgive (section 4), and one of the *pro tanto* moral wrongness of hypocritical forgiveness (section 5). I reject the former account. However, I am sympathetic to the latter.

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