



Philosophisches Kolloquium

Wintersemester 2024/25

Apologies – a critical view

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Sincere apologies are often seen as a path to forgiveness and reconciliation. In this talk, I will shed a critical light on apologies. In part (1), I will argue that apologies require an attitude of humility but that they are also directive in the sense that an apologizer tries to bring the addressee of the apology to forgive him. In part (2), I will provide a detailed argument for the directive nature of apologies by analysing the possible meanings of the expressions “to accept an apology” and “to reject an apology”. The attitudinal and the directive component of these apologies, I argue, are in conflict. First, a truly remorseful and humble offender has no reason to want the victim to forgive him. Second, the directive nature of apologies implies that the apologizer is putting pressure on the victim to forgive him, which is incompatible with an attitude of humility. This pressure may result either from the nature of the directive speech act itself or from societal expectations (3). In the final part, I illustrate the possibility of genuine forgiveness without preceding apology, and I tentatively conclude that apologies often stand in the way of forgiveness instead of facilitating it (4).

Mittwoch, 29.01.25 | 16 Uhr c.t. | Raum R 007

Alle Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen!