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Aleksandar Fatić

CAN MEMORY ERASURE CONTRIBUTE TO A VIRTUOUS TEMPERING OF EMOTIONS?

ABSTRACT
The paper deals with a perspective of Christian philosophy on artificial memory erasuse for psychotherapeutic purposes. Its central question is whether a safe and reliable technology of memory erasure, once it is available, would be acceptable from a Christian ethics point of view. The main facet of this question is related to the Christian ethics requirement of contrition for the past wrongs, which in the case of memory erasure of particulary troubling experiences and personal choices would not be possible. The paper argues that there are limits to the ethical significance of contrition in the writings of the leading Christian fathers on the theme (e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas), where excessive suffering and inability to forgive oneself for one's actions is an impediment to the achivement of tranquility of mind and spiritual redemption, rather than a prerequisite for it. The paper thus concludes that there is no hindrance in principle from the Christian ethics point of view to pursuing a voluntary and selective memory erasure as a psychotherapeutic technique once a fully adequate technology is available.

KEYWORDS
Christian ethics, contrition, tranquility, redemption, suffering, wrongdoings, memory erasure, psychotherapy

There are numerous practical arguments in favor of artificial memory erasure. Victims of traumatic events such as genocide or rape are likely to benefit from a partial memory erasure or modification by being able to integrate their 'life script' more quickly and effectively. Additionally, many of the somatic consequences of the stress associated with traumatic memories might be avoided: thus memory erasure might help prevent the risk of psycho-somatic illnesses ranging from high bloodpressure to cancer.[1] Finally, memory erasure might improve the quality of life of many victims of trauma, with all of the social, economic and moral consequences such improvement would bring.

1 In her moving autobiography Susan Brison (1997) narrates all of the personal identity issues arising from her own 'disruption of life narrative' after she had been raped while hiking in the South of France and left for dead in a cave. The social conditions for the reintegration of 'life narrative' based on Brison's and similar accounts were discussed by Jaqui Poltera (2010).

Aleksandar Fatić: Principal Research Fellow, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade; fatic@instifdt.bg.ac.rs.

On the other hand, arguments against memory erasure mainly revolve around its impact on the authenticity and completeness of personal identity. If the erasure of some experiences from one's conscious autobiography would compromise one's 'proper' personal identity, memory erasure might blur the autonomy of future decisions and reduce the quality and sustainability of any emotional 'closure' achieved after trauma. If such closure is not achieved by 're-processing' the traumatic experiences and integrating them in one's perception of one's life as a whole, but by simply deleting some of the particularly intractable experiences, the sense of peace so achieved might be easily destroyed by similar experiences in the future.

While the issue of any impact memory erasure might have on the quality of emotional closure is an empirical one, I argue here that memory erasure, if voluntary, does not militate against personal autonomy and is in principle compatible with Christian values. Furthermore, I argue that such memory deletion or modification can enhance personal autonomy by allowing the person to freely choose what kind of person one wishes to become. Thus I will argue that, on philosophical grounds alone, memory erasure should be freely available to everyone once a safe technology is fully developed.

From a Christian point of view contrition plays a key role in character development. Whilst the emotional and volitional aspects of contrition are equally important, and the certain 'emphatic' nature of repentance is expected, what really matters in the context of development of Christian virtues and character is the person's ability to leave the sinful ways behind and change their ways. The concept of forgiveness, apart from its obvious soteriological meaning, plays a crucial functional role of encouraging the moving on after the confession and repentance. The Greek term for contrition is particularly illustrative here: the term 'metanoia' literally means a 'transformation', suggesting a change of life and personal values (Walden 2010). The Christian promise of forgiveness is a powerful encouragement to move on and transform the past. Perhaps the most often cited example from the Scriptures is Jesus's being anointed by a sinful women (Luke 7.36–50), where the repentance shown by the woman is not emphatic, but peaceful and implicit, full of hope, as is the generosity of Jesus. Only when questioned, Jesus makes it clear that he not only knows her past, but has released her from her sins. Her actions are an example of humbleness in asking for forgiveness and of faith in accepting it.

The dominant understanding of contrition, which is well established in traditional theology of both the Eastern and Western Christianity, suggests that the amount of remorse and sorrow (thus emotional suffering) that arise from the recognition of one's sins can well be excessive and detrimental to a person's overall wellbeing (Aquinas 2007: 2569; St. Macarios of Egypt in Chrysostomos et al., 1988). Aquinas writes:

> Contrition, as regards the sorrow in the reason, i.e. the displeasure, whereby the sin is displeasing through being an offense against God, cannot be too great; even as neither can the love of charity be too great, for when this is increased

> the aforesaid displeasure is increased also. But, as regards the sensible sorrow, contrition may be too great, even as outward affliction of the body may be too great. In all these things the rule should be the safeguarding of the subject, and of that general well-being which suffices for the fulfillment of one's duties; hence it is written (Rm. 12:1): "Let your sacrifice be reasonable [*Vulg.: 'Present your bodies ... a reasonable sacrifice']." (*Summa Theologiae*, Third Part, Supplement, Question 3, Article 2 — Aquinas 2007: 2569).

Aquinas makes a difference between the sorrow arising from contrition which is connected with the feeling of guilt (displeasure 'through being an offense against God'), which, according to him, can never be too great, and the strictly emotional, 'embodied' part of that sorrow ('the sensible sorrow'), which may be too great because the emotions triggered by the sin might compromise the body and the person's physical and mental health. Indeed, one of the major problems encountered by Christian pastors is the inability of those who repent to 'move on' because of a persistent sense of guilt which is unaffected by absolution after confession. Especially when the events, including one's own wrongdoings, are traumatic, sometimes they tend to 'stick' in the person's mind, thus making it difficult for the person to believe that one is forgiven and to muster the strength to focus on the future (Worthington 2006, Aten et al. 2011). All of these difficulties militate against the person's autonomy more than a circumspect practice of memory erasure would. There is a common understanding of ethics, and especially religious ethics, which ties the rationality of beliefs to the process whereby these beliefs have been acquired, rather than to the evidence that supports or refutes the belief (Jung 2017). While the fact that memory erasure might disrupt the continuity of a process of acquisition of (moral) beliefs might on the surface make the practice morally suspect, on the substantive level, responsible memory erasure has the capacity to address the hindrances to a person's future moral agency which arise from their inaibility to deal with past problems. The problems in dealing with a sense of guilt occur on the level of what Augustine calls 'sorrow in the reason'. On this level, the sense of guilt may destroy one's life narrative without immediately, or visibly, causing an emotional stir that would be significant enough to compromise the body in the short term. After all, many people who attend counseling do not show any symptoms of psychological, and much less physical problems, but have unresolved issues that make them feel permanently 'stuck' and profoundly threaten their identity, ability to mobilize their creative energy, or create close and intimate relationships.

The counseling techniques that address this issue focus specifically on reducing the sense of guilt, rather than dealing with emotions directly. They are close to cognitive and behavioural models of counseling and take the form of educated discussions about the ethics of the Scriptures and a practical Christian ethics (Clinton and Ohlschlager 2002).

To show that autonomy is compatible with and, sometimes, increased by memory erasure, I argue that *personal identity* and *personal autonomy* do not

help define each other. I thus argue that a stable personal identity is not interrupted by a prevailing heteronomy in decision-making. The sense of personal identity I rely on here is that of a 'life narrative'. This is a common way in which most people perceive their identity and it has been persuasively argued for by a number of philosophers (Schechtman 1996, Ricoeur 1991, Nelson 2001, Hutto 2007, Dennett 1992, Brunner 2003, Kircher and David 2003, Rudd 2009, Taylor 1989, Wollheim 1984, Woody 2004). Critiques of the narrative view of identity, on the other hand, have mainly touched on the metaphysics of persons rather than targeting the functional appropriateness and intuitiveness of narrative as 'autobiographic identity' (e.g. Strawson 2004).

Memory in the Narrative Identity

The narrative concept of personal identity is the self-perception based on an autobiographical life story, which is laden with values and interpretations that the person considers vital to how she sees herself and the world. According to Marya Schechtman, the personal narrative must satisfy two basic conditions: (i) the articulation condition (it must be reasonably intelligible and portray a comprehensible life story), and (ii) the reality condition (the narrative must be consistent with 'basic observational facts and interpretative facts' (Schechtman 1996: 114, 120). By satisfying the two conditions the personal narrative allows people to relate to each other by acknowledging the same type of reality that connects them. In times of identity crisis it is usually this type of perception of self-identity that is damaged or threatened, and its re-articulation or re-building (e.g. by psychotherapy or counseling) often helps restore the person's self-confidence and ability to project a healthy first-person perspective on the present and the future (Fatić 2013). The narrative concept of identity is appropriate for my present purpose simply because it is *prima facie* intuitively appealing in light of the ordinary way in which we tend to define who we are: by 'narrating' the experiences, values and attitudes that we believe define us as persons.

Some traumatic experiences clearly have the capacity to destroy one's personal narrative. We all have certain concepts of who we are and becoming the victim of extreme violence, for example, can shatter those concepts. Whether or not the personal narrative can be reconstructed through psychotherapy and/or counseling is doubtful, and even if this is possible, it can never be guaranteed. Thus we are left with the possibility that a once flourishing personal identity could be damaged or altered by arbitrary victimization which the person will have physically survived.

If there was a ready technology to actually effect memory modification, some people might choose to erase or modify their memories in response to experiences the memory of which threatens their sense of identity and even mental health. Assuming that memory erasure involves elements of autobiographic memory which are significant for one's development as a person, and not just irrelevant memories such as having read a newspaper or paid a bill, the narrative identity is likely to be modified by loss of memory. If I was able to

delete the memory of a conflict or a period of suffering that marked a significant portion of my life experience, or of a trauma that has made me reflect on fundamental values and relationships with others, my personal story will *ipso facto* change. Strictly speaking I will no longer be the same person that I was while I still had these deeply challenging experiences. Thus it seems that the idea of memory deletion militates against the continuity of personal narrative in its linear, continuous form that tends to be associated with a highly functional and integrated persona.

Memory and Autonomy

The situation with the relationship between autobiographic memory and personal autonomy is different, and this has important logical consequences for the relationship between autonomy and personal identity. Unlike the concept of personal identity as a (preferably relatively linear) narrative, which is fundamentally diachronic (it is partially defined by a continuum in time and thus depends on memories), autonomy is essentially synchronic: it marks decisions that are made 'here and now'. Autonomy is not defined by previous decisions or experiences. Thus autonomy is possible for different people who make different decisions in the same situation, as much as for the same person who makes different decisions in the same circumstances at various points in time. While the continuity of person in terms of the narrative requires, as Schechtman points out, a certain consistency, autonomy does not: it is possible to make contradictory decisions, arising from contrasted values, all of which are fully autonomous. Trivially, if I take position A on a theoretical problem at moment x, I may equally autonomously, based on my own contemplation of the issues involved, take position not-A on the same problem at moment y. There are no grounds for challenging the autonomy of any of the two contradictory positions on the grounds that they are contradictory or lack synchronic continuity. Depending on the arguments and circumstances involved, however, there may be grounds for challenging my intellectual identity and/or integrity, e.g. if such changes reflect contradictory values against a relatively stable background of other relevant assumptions.

On a more controversial level, imagine a woman who at young age was a pornographic actress, but subsequently decides to become quite conservative, marry a conservative spouse and raise her children in a traditional way. The circumstances force her to keep her past from her family and friends, and the revelation of that past threatens to shatter the life she has now chosen for herself. She is understandably so troubled by her autobiographic memories that she decides to try to forget her youth. If her past is discovered, clearly all kinds of moral issues would come into the open with her husband: ranging from 'who she really is' to respect of his dignity and right to know relevant facts about her to the sincerity of her conservative values. This type of situation has been known to have presented itself in counseling and more often than not the outcome was divorce and suffering for all parties concerned.

Imagine now that the woman has the option to safely erase memories from her past, that indeed this is technologically feasible, and that she freely chooses to do so in a well-informed manner. Subsequently she is able to live her life *as though* she has always been the person she is now. Does this decision undermine her personal autonomy?

There appears to be no philosophical reason why her decision to erase the memories could not be construed as a clear and autonomous expression of her authentic value-position towards the decisions she had (perhaps fully autonomously) made in the past. Imagine, finally, that the woman is confronted by her husband who happens to find out the truth: in this case he would know more about her past than she would, and her decision to erase the memories would bear clear witness to her sincerity of belief and her ultimate rejection of her previous 'identity'. In this context she would appear to have acted in a way similar to deciding to take drugs in order to 'remove' an illness from the body. In a sense, the autonomous decision to remove the memories at least partly removes the presumably negative moral value attributed to decisions taken earlier in life. Thus memory erasure makes it possible to both functionally and, to some extent, morally reconstruct one's identity.

The decision to remove some of the memories, and thus interrupt the continuity of the person she once was is not in principle different, with regard to autonomy, from a decision to change one's behavior, thus trying to factually 'become a different person'. The difference is clear in terms of continuity of persons: if one changes one's behavior to the level of unrecognizability, thus desiring to appear as a completely 'new person' (e.g. by changing one's temper or abandoning a bad habit, such as drug use or cigarette smoking), one remains the same person one was and only appears different because one's behavior changes. However, if one decides to make an incision into one's memories, thus cutting out a part of one's life narrative, then in a real sense one modifies one's personal identity. This interruption to the continuity of person would occur even if there is little behavior change, just as in the former case the continuity of persons would persist even with a most radical behavior change. However, from the point of view of autonomy of decision-making, there is no difference between the two cases. If the means are available to treat trouble memories in the same way as an illness, and such decisions are voluntary and well informed, then there are no grounds to argue that memory erasure diminishes personal autonomy.

Furthermore, there are convincing grounds to argue that memory erasure in such cases in fact *re-enforces autonomy*, by preventing situations where, despite the transformation of values and self-perceptions, the person would remain *imprisoned* by past experiences which she rejects, but they nevertheless stubbornly determine her narrative. Voluntary memory erasure is both emancipatory and revitalizing for the sense of self-invention that lies at the core of our perception of personal autonomy.

The argument presented here depicts memory erasure as merely a radical form of personality enhancement. Philosophical arguments have recently

been put forward in favour of a compulsory use of drugs to enhance the personalities of entire communities. Such personality enhancement may be seen as necessary in order to avoid 'the ultimate harm', which can range from a situation where life is no longer worth living because of inter-personal conflicts to the obliteration of life on the planet by war (Savulescu, Persson 2008, 2013). Others have argued that personality enhancement can only be a feasible option if it is voluntary, because only in such a way do personal autonomy and the moral quality of actions fully survive (Rakić 2014).

The idea of memory erasure is usually seen as being a more 'core issue' than e.g. the propensity for empathy or solidarity, which according to some research might to some extent be influenced by drugs such as oxytocin (Rodrigues et al. 2009, Wu N. et al. 2012). However, from the point of view of personal autonomy, there is no difference between memory deletion and, for example, empathic personality enhancement. Assuming that this becomes possible, a person might decide to have her memories erased in the same way as one might decide to take a drug in order to feel greater empathy for others. There is, however, a structural difference between the two in that memory erasure is entirely self-referential. One decides to become more empathetic because this will benefit others, and only secondarily would the same decision, if taken by others, benefit the agent herself. The reference in personality enhancement in the context of preventing the ultimate harm is primarily to collective well-being. On the other hand, memory deletion, if possible, would be primarily (not exclusively) a self-referenced decision: one decides to delete or modify one's own memories in order to improve one's own sense of identity and integrity, and this only secondarily impacts others (e.g. the family, in the cited example). In this sense, while being a more 'core issue' than the usual forms of personality enhancement, memory erasure conduces to autonomy because of its ability to consolidate one's identity in essentially self-referential context and with enormous emancipatory potential for the free self-reinvention of personality.

Another difference between memory-erasure as a form of personality-enhancement and the use of medication to increase empathy or inter-personal bonding is that memory-erasure involves the ultimate negative value judgment of one's own experiences and thus part of the past: this judgment is so radical that the experiences are deemed totally unacceptable from the point of view of one's current life-plans and value system, thus they must be erased. The ability to make ultimate judgments is predicated on a strong moral subject, with clear concepts of the moral right and wrong. It is also additionally autonomous in the sense that it is not motivated by external pressures to 'be good to others': one will not necessarily be a better person towards others once one erases one's trouble memories, however one is likely to be a freer, more autonomous and happier person. It is therefore in a sense improper to debate the availability of memory erasure on the level of social policy, which is currently the case with pharmacological moral, cognitive or mood enhancement. Memory erasure is much less relevant to social policy as it remains a highly individual

issue. However, it impacts directly the most traditional philosophical questions of what it means to have a good life and how far one is justified in going to secure a good life. While the very question of memory erasure does not in any way prejudice the question of what it is to have a good life, clearly it has the capacity to serve its achievement if it is made available as a free choice.

Is Memory Erasure Acceptable from the Point of View of Christian Ethics?

The most obvious problem with, or objection to the idea that one should have free choice to erase part of one's life narrative (at least as it is understood in close connection with autobiographic memory) is the impact of such erasure on responsibility. It might be argued that the ability to deal with one's past and to cast an adequate value-light on it is so integral to the Christian faith that removing unbearable aspects of the past, or those that threaten one's present life-choices, falsifies the person's Christian life's authenticity.

While arbitrary memory erasure certainly does become a legitimate target of this objection, a circumspect and responsible decision-making on when to erase memories, especially one that would be able to be procedurally monitored, perhaps by ethics boards in hospitals, is vulnerable to the objection. While memory erasure, if freely available outside institutionalized controls, might be used out of a variety of motives, from a desire to avoid criminal prosecution or public acknowledgement of one's moral responsibility for actions, to becoming an illegal 'tranquilizer' that could be offered on the black market, the specific context in which I advance the proposal of free memory erasure is not this. I suggest that, in situations that satisfy the criteria arising from the Christian view (which is obviously common to many other religions as well) of the desirability of human flourishing in the moral realm, and, relatedly, of human emancipation from own moral wrongdoing, memory erasure may be a perfectly acceptable tool for the achievement of these ends. In some situations repentance, both in its soteriological and in its related psychological function, may be entirely impossible due to the person's inability to deal with the past.

The very concept of repentance (*metanoia*) implies not just the acceptance of guilt, but the volitional effort to systematically change one's choices in the future (Nicodemos 1989).[2] The moral or intellectual side is accompanied by the volitional aspect of repentance. However, the latter is not possible without the emotional aspect, namely the ability of those who repent to overcome the anxiety or depression that often follow the moral recognition of wrongdoing or sin and arrive at an emotional stage where they can change their ways, while achieving at least a minimally functional emotional equilibrium. If the

2 St. Nikodemos is the author of the Orthodox version of the seminal work on asceticism, *Unseen Warfare*, from the Venetian original written by the Catholic author Lorenzo Scupoli. He was canonized in 1955.

emotions are so stirred up that the very thought of wrongdoing overwhelms the person to the stage that she is unable to think rationally and act decisively, repentance is practically impossible.

Discussions of the emotional side of repentance in Christian scholarship often focus only on the emotions that follow the value-recognition of the wrongfulness of one's actions. So according to Stephen Graham:

> Repentance includes three elements – intellectual, emotional and volitional. The intellectual element involves a change in thought and an act of moral conscience – recognition of sin, acceptance of guilt, and a realisation of the sin's consequences. The emotional element includes a change of feelings. Contrary to the proverb that says, "Sinning is the best part of repentance," we feel genuinely sorrowful and remorseful for our sin and our failure to meet moral standards. (Graham 2013: 3).

The above is but one part of the emotional identity or signature of repentance. Without the ability to 'react badly' to our own wrongs it is almost impossible to consider one's 'metanoia', or transformation, as genuine repentance. Between two people who 'repent' for the same deed, one of whom however expresses regrets without visible emotions, while fully following through with behavior change, while the other changes behavior to the same level, however expresses emotion of remorse, the latter will likely be considered by many as having 'genuinely' repented. In this sense, negative emotions may be considered *definitive* of true repentance. *Cathechism of the Catholic Church* (*CCC*) thus states: 'Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again' (*CCC* 1451). The expression of emotions both lends credibility to the act of repentance and represents a way towards the development of Christian virtues (*CCC* 1770).

On the other hand, when the experiences or one's own wrongdoings are so grave (in the mind of the persons themselves) that they cause extreme anxiety and instability, these emotions can in fact *inhibit* repentance unless the very act of repentance credibly promises to relieve the anxiety. The person from the example given earlier in the text might feel such anxiety because of her pornographic past, and may find her own actions so repulsive, that the act of full repentance might in fact be possible *only* if it comes with a promise of memory modification. In such situations, if the anxiety is caused by moral misconduct repentance should lead to emotional equilibrium, at least to an extent. With drastic emotional reactions caused by one's own moral wrongs in the past, the functionality of one's cognitive and volitional capacities could be, and often is, so impaired that only the promise of an immediate relief will facilitate the emotional 'facing up' to the totality of one's guilt involved in the moral wrong. This, after all, is why people take tranquilizers, alcohol, or drugs to calm the emotional fury that is unleashed in them when they recollect some of the particularly 'bad' things that they have done in the past. There is no principled problem with repentance if the person takes tranquilizers in order to confess fully and retain sufficient calmness and cognitive functionality in order to

complete the 'turn' of repentance: confession – *metanoia* as a lasting change of heart. However, the effect of tranquilizers passes away and the memories and emotions caused by them come back – sometimes with greater force than before. Furthermore, the person who takes tranquilizers prior to confession knows that they only have a temporary effect, and this affects her conviction in her own ability to put the experience behind her in a sustainable, permanent manner. Only too often sufferers of such moral nightmares confess, repent on the level of values and cognition, but then fall back into the trap of guilt, anxiety, depression, and sometimes psychosis. This makes the act of repentance incomplete as the leap of personal redemption, in this life too.

While memory erasure remains a controversial topic in bioethics, mainly with a view of its alleged impact on personal autonomy and responsibility, and a topic that has hardly been broached in Christian ethics, pharmacological means to effect such erasure are advancing rapidly. Some recent research has suggested, at least tentatively, that the use of the popular drug used to treat cardio-vascular problems, propranolol, might affect the structuring of autobiographic memories, especially after traumatic events (Pitman et al. 2002, Brunet et al. 2008, Henry et al. 2007). This is a common drug used by millions of people, and if adequate regimes of administration for the purpose of memory erasure or modification are developed it could be readily applied in this vein. This is particularly easy to imagine given that the decades of clinical usage of propranolol have established it as a relatively safe drug, with few side effects. At the same time, new pharmacological research is continuing along the avenue of 'moral enhancement', which has become a fashionable topic in bioethics. Numerous studies have been published on the use of oxytocin for encouraging empathy and bonding, and the drug has been described as an agent of 'character improvement' (Kosfeld et al. 2005, Domes et al. 2007, Feldman et al. 2007, Guastella et al. 2008, Neumann 2008).

While from a Christian point of view (and from the point of view of traditional ethics) it is doubtful whether behavior enhancements such as these, if they can indeed be brought about by medication alone, really qualify as true 'moral' or 'character' enhancements, memory erasure is different. It is an area where pharmacological interventions are morally less problematic than in enhancement projects *per se*, although dealing with memory modification or erasure links the discourses of therapy and enhancement. The reason is twofold: memory erasure is not subject to public policy, such as enhancement might be: the decision to erase memories in the delineated context is limited to the person's own conviction that this is the only way to deal with the unacceptable past. It is thus a self-redeeming action with both therapeutic and enhancement consequences for the person. This decision, when made in a legitimate way (not in order to avoid criminal prosecution or for thrill, by using black market services, etc.) is entirely in accordance with Christian morality. Most importantly, it is a decision that not only leaves personal autonomy intact (although it admittedly impacts the continuity of person), but also has the capacity to enhance personal autonomy. Memory erasure achieves this by offering the

promise of liberation from the past and thus fostering greater confidence in lasting autonomous change, however difficult and emotionally upsetting might be the experiences one feels one must forget.

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Aleksandar Fatić

Da li brisanje sećanja može doprineti moralno poželjnom uravnoteživanju emocija?

Apstrakt

Tekst se bavi perspektivom hrišćanske filozofije na pitanje o veštačkom brisanju pamćenja u psihoterapeutske svrhe. Centralno pitanje oko koje se konstituiše argumentacija teksta je da li bi bezbedna i pouzdana tehnologija brisanja sećanja, onda kada bude raspoloživa, bila prihvatljiva sa tačke gledišta hrišćanske etike. Osnovna dimenzija ovog pitanja odnosi se naglašavanje pokajanja u hrišćanskoj etici. Kada je reč o brisanju sećanja na posebno mučna iskustva i lične izbore, takvo brisanje sećanja bi onemogućilo pokajanje. U tekstu se argumentiše da postoje granice etičkog značaja pokajanja u spisima vodećih hrišćanskih očeva o ovoj temi (npr. Sv. Tome Akvinskog), te da oni preteranu patnju i nesposobnost da se oprosti sebi samo za sopstvene radnje opisuju kao prepreku za postizanje duševnog mira i duhovnog spasenja, a ne kao uslove za to spasenje. Tekst stoga zaključuje da nema u principu prepreke, sa hrišćanske tačke gledišta, za dobrovoljno i selektivno brisanje sećanja u svrhu psihoterapije onda kada bude na raspolaganju potpuno adekvatna tehnologija za to.

Ključne reči: hrišćanska etika, pokajanje, duševni mir, duhovno spasenje, patnja, pogrešni izbori u prošlosti, brisanje sećanja, psihoterapija