

Peter A. DePergola II

# Forget Me Not

*The Neuroethical Case Against Memory Manipulation*

COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

## About the author

**Peter A. DePergola II**, Ph.D., M.T.S., is Assistant Professor of Medicine at University of Massachusetts Medical School, Assistant Professor of Medical Humanities at the College of Our Lady of the Elms, and Director of Clinical Ethics at Baystate Health. An acclaimed author, educator, and speaker, he holds secondary appointments at Tufts University School of Medicine, Sacred Heart University, and the American Academy of Neurology. Dr. DePergola's many publications span the fields of philosophy, theology, medicine, bioethics, and medical humanities.

*"A bold stance that challenges received wisdom is a difficult endeavor for the best of writers. DePergola sets out on an exciting pathway to write an imaginative and original analysis of the relation between memory, emotion, identity, and ethical decision making. In this breathtaking view of over fifty years of memory research, the reader not only evidences brinkmanship on the cutting edge of neuroscience, but also a tour de force on moral normativity. The creativity and perspicacity of the analysis is woven together with a treasure trove of classical writers, whose time-tested insights shed light on this topic in a way that most could never have imagined. The list of giants is extensive, including Plato and Aristotle, Hume and Descartes, Dostoyevsky and Shakespeare, Freud and Heidegger, Husserl and James, Kant and Locke, Nietzsche and Nussbaum, Pascal and Rawls, Ricoeur and Rorty, Sartre and Scheler, Taylor and Wittgenstein, MacIntyre and McCormick. Here is a master ethicist at work, balancing each side, presenting fair and accurate perspectives of the debate, perceptively seeing difficulties that have gone unnoticed, and pivoting to a conclusion that was as startling to the author as it may be to the reader."*

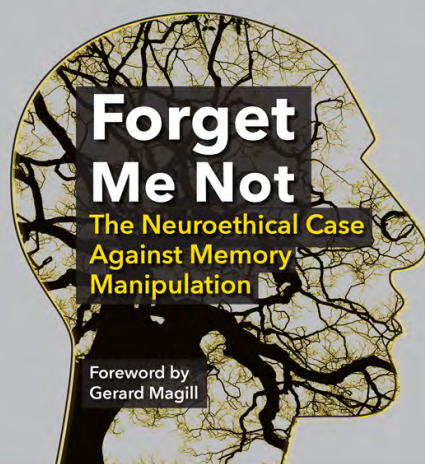
**Gerard Magill**, Ph.D.

Vernon F. Gallagher Chair & Professor of Healthcare Ethics, Duquesne University

## Summary

The first philosophical monograph on the ethics of memory manipulation (MM), "Forget Me Not: The Neuroethical Case Against Memory Manipulation" contends that any attempt to directly and intentionally erase episodic memories poses a grave threat to the human condition that cannot be justified within a normative moral calculus. Grounding its thesis in four evidential effects – namely, (i) MM disintegrates autobiographical memory, (ii) the disintegration of autobiographical memory degenerates emotional rationality, (iii) the degeneration of emotional rationality decays narrative identity, and (iv) the decay of narrative identity disables one to seek, identify, and act on the good – DePergola argues that MM cannot be justified as a morally licit practice insofar as it disables one to seek, identify, and act on the good. A landmark achievement in the field of neuroethics, this book is a welcome addition to both the scholarly and professional community in philosophical and clinical bioethics.

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