

ABSTRACT

The PhD Thesis *Man without Memory: The Work of Max Picard in Contemporary Philosophical and Literary Contexts* focuses on the thought of the Swiss philosopher Max Picard. Reflections on language and silence stand out as the foundation of Picard's thinking, from which unfold the themes of time, memory and forgetting, the media, total war, the atomic bomb, the Eichmann phenomenon, and the identification with the perpetrator. Picard's thoughts on total war and the atomic bomb are set in the context of the works of Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt or Günther Anders. The event of the atomic bomb – understood phenomenologically as the first human experience of totality – is interpreted as an external manifestation of the inner transformation of man. By depicting the so-called “acoustics of war”, the Thesis gives context to Picard's reflections on total war and radio in Nazi Germany. Picard’s critique of the media reflects the ontological transformation of man, associated with the loss of word and the transition from visual to acoustic. The themes of forgetting, discontinuity, atomization of time, disruption of memory, and the end of man as a temporal being - Picard's key to the interpretation of 20th-century events - are interpreted in dialogue with Augustine, Friedrich Nietzsche, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Pierre Nora or Bettina Stangneth. The thesis elaborates on the ethical taboo of identification with the perpetrator and places Picard's concept “Hitler in ourselves” and its implications in the context of the work of Hannah Arendt, Franz Kafka, Jonathan Littell, Jochen Gerz, and Esther Shalev-Gerz.