



## The trauma of the flashback: memory and its suffering (negotiated through Gerhard Richter's painting 'September.')

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### Abstract

This paper explores the repetitive nature of the flashback and discusses Cathy Caruth's notion of the flashback as a traumatic event from outside that has moved inside without any mediation. Freud writes about *Nachtraglichkeit* – or deferred action trauma constituted by the relationship between two-events or experiences of two competing impulses. Included is a discussion of Gerhard Richter's painting 'September', a gesture towards the integration of the flashback. The intensity of the traumatic experience makes it difficult to remember but impossible to forget, and any form of recollection seem inadequate. Mediation in this instance becomes a tool of integration, a bodily or physical lens that brings fragments together into a coherent whole for filing away into the past. Trauma is an unfinished, un-integrated experience in search of a witness where the flashback functions as the haunting reminder.

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