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Memory, Forgetting and the Representation of History in Gerhard Richter's *18 October 1977*

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With the cycle of photo-paintings entitled 18 October 1977 (1988), Gerhard Richter takes as his subject the story and demise of the West German Red Army Faction (also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group).[1] The choice of recent historical subject matter, the large-scale format and the direct representation of death appear to revive a tradition of monumental figuration whose primary aim was to celebrate grand political actions: the genre of history painting.[2] However, a closer look at the fifteen greyscale canvases prompts us to ask whether this tradition is the best way to comprehend 18 October 1977, and indeed, whether the cycle represents history at all. The October paintings are darkened and blurred so as to render the reference to their source photographs hardly recognisable: instead of offering a clear representation of history, Richter's cycle seemingly erases the events and characters it purports to depict. Moreover, the frequent repetition of images throughout the cycle – for instance the three paintings of Ulrike Meinhof's corpse made from a single source photograph (Dead 1, Dead 2, Dead 3) – shatters the cycle's claim to narration: instead of a structured narrative of the past, we are left, as viewers, with the ever-repeating image of death. The title itself, which refers to the date when Meinhof's fellow Red Army Faction (RAF) members Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe were found dead in their cells at the high-security Stammheim Prison in Stuttgart, both grounds the cycle in a specific historical moment while confusing the reception of the paintings: Meinhof died, in fact, in May 1976, and several other paintings (Arrest 1 and 2, Youth Portrait, Confrontation 1, 2 and 3) also depict earlier moments.[3]

Some critics have argued that Richter's 18 October 1977 demonstrates the impossibility of painting to represent history in the twentieth century.[4] However, this paper argues that, rather than embodying a general postmodern stance against representation, the October cycle points to a historically specific problem, namely how to represent a controversial moment in German history: the death of three RAF members at the Stammheim Prison. The problem of the representation of the RAF, in other words, forms the background to Richter's paintings: not only were the images that appeared in the public domain throughout the 1970s highly

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[1] A far-left militant organisation founded in 1970, known in its initial stages as the Baader-Meinhof Group.

[2] The definition of the genre given by André Félibien implies figuration *and* narration: "[…] one must depict history and fable and represent great deeds like historians […] History or fable is an imitation of an action which has occurred", in *Conférences de l'académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, pendant l'année 1667*, Paris, F. Léonard, 1668, unpaginated preface (translation mine). Richter's *October* cycle, as we will see, directly challenges both these traditional attributes

[3] Holger Meins, represented in *Arrest 1* and *Arrest 2*, died as the result of a hunger strike in November 1974, while Ulrike Meinhof was found hanged from the bars of her cell in May 1976. Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe died on the night of 17 to 18 October 1977.

[4] This is, to some extent, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's position in "Note on Gerhard Richter's 'October 18, 1977'", in *October*, no. 48, Spring 1989, pp. 88-109 – though Buchloh also makes clear that the *October* paintings complicate this position.

regulated (taking the form of wanted posters and official photographs of the activists' deaths that were released to the press); more fundamentally, the narrative that would explain the whole phenomenon of the Red Army Faction, and in particular the Stammheim deaths, was never convincingly established.[5] In such circumstances, how could a "return" to the traditional genre of history painting ever claim to represent events as they "really" had occurred? In this paper, I argue that Richter's painterly modifications of his photographic sources depicting the Stammheim events (blurring, darkening, repeating and cropping) provide a more faithful representation of history, not as it "really" occurred, but as it may be reprocessed a decade, or more, later.

In the first part of this paper, I suggest we turn to the work of the French art historian Georges Didi-Huberman, whose dialectical understanding of images as both veil (voile) and tear (déchirure) provides a means to comprehend Richter's blurred paintings in terms other than merely that of the erasure of the past. In the second part, I redefine the problem of the representation of the RAF in the paintings as one of memory and forgetting. Grounding my analysis in the painterly modifications brought to the source photographs, I argue that what I see as the coexistence of memory and forgetting in the paintings is the condition of the representation of the history of the RAF.

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Georges Didi-Huberman's Images in Spite of All focuses on four photographs of Auschwitz taken in the summer of 1944 by members of the Sonderkommando.[6] Arguing against the idea that the reality of the Nazi camps can neither be represented nor imagined, Didi-Huberman proposes that in some cases fragments of images are closer to the truth than a "whole" image. Although these photographs do not tell all the truth about Auschwitz, writes Didi-Huberman, "they are for us – for our eyes today – truth itself, meaning its vestige, its meagre shreds: what remains visually of Auschwitz."[7] It is to defend the capacity of images to reveal something of a traumatic reality, in their very incompleteness, that Didi-Huberman coins the term "tear-image" (image-déchirure).[8]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Didi-Huberman's text, originally published as a catalogue essay for the exhibition Mémoire des camps. Photographies des camps de concentration et d'extermination nazis (1933-1999), was heavily criticised, in particular by two Lacanian psychoanalysts for its implication that the traumatic experience of the Holocaust could be represented.[9] Thus, when Didi-Huberman writes that the tear-image,

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[5] For a summary of the Stammheim criminal investigation and its contradictory elements, see Stefan Aust, *The Baader-Meinhof Group*, London, The Bodley Head, 1987, pp. 542-552. The book was made into a film by Uli Edel (*The Baader Meinhof Complex*, 2008).

[6] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All* (trans. Shane B. Lillis), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008. For another discussion of Didi-Huberman's 'tear-image' see Margaret Iversen's forthcoming *Photography, Trace and Trauma*.

[7] Ibid., p. 38.

[8] Shane B. Lillis's translation of *image-déchirure* as "tear-image" may lead to confusion in English, and the term might be better translated as "torn-image". However, as Didi-Huberman also refers to the "tear" as noun (*la déchirure*), I have decided to go with Lillis's translation as it retains the symmetry between the two terms ("tear-image" and "tear"), as in the original (*image-déchirure* and *déchirure*).

[9] The exhibition took place at the Hôtel de Sully, Paris, in 2001. See Gérard Wajcman, "De la croyance photographique",

contrary to the fetish-image, is that "from which a fragment of the real escapes",[10] his argument seems to contradict Lacan's thesis of the unrepresentability of the real (although Didi-Huberman precisely does his best to make Lacan's psychoanalytic revision of Freud coincide with his own account).[11] But what is more fundamentally at stake in Didi-Huberman's analysis is the possibility that an image might be dual: in this way, the four photographs of Auschwitz are "neither pure illusion nor all of the truth, but a dialectic stirring together the veil with its rip."[12] The four photographs discussed by Didi-Huberman do not represent Auschwitz clearly, or exhaustively: they are out of focus, badly framed, and in one case, only capture the sky. Yet, their failure to achieve realistic representation is all the more poignant, and dramatises their "tear" aspect.

I do not, in borrowing Didi-Huberman's concept, attempt to draw a historical parallel between the Holocaust and the RAF. What interests me in the tear-image, in relation to Richter, is its dialectical structure, in which the fragment coexists with, or even generates, a revelatory experience – not, therefore, a simple mimesis, but a subtler evocation of that which is being obscured. How do Richter's paintings express this dialectic between the image as "veil" and the image as "tear"? The motif of the veil immediately calls to mind a painting closely associated with the October cycle: Blanket (1988, fig. 1). Robert Storr has pointed out that beneath the white paint of this apparently abstract painting lies one of the three canvases based on the same photograph of Gudrun Ensslin's corpse – the only one to figure in the cycle being Hanged (fig. 2).[13] While Ensslin's figure is, in Blanket, entirely overpainted, thus effecting a quasi-total transformation of figuration into abstraction, part of the original photo-painting (a dark shadow and the corner of a frame) is still visible in the upper-left corner.

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in *Les Temps Modernes*, LVI, 2001, pp. 47-83, and Elisabeth Pagnoux, "Reporter photographe à Auschwitz", ibid., pp. 84-108. In the first part of his book, Didi-Huberman reprints the exhibition catalogue essay (first published in *Mémoire des camps. Photographies des camps de concentration et d'extermination nazis*, ed. by Clément Chéroux, exh. cat. Paris, Hôtel de Sully, Paris, Marval, 2001); in the second part, he responds to these attacks.

[10] Didi-Huberman, 2008 (note 6), pp. 80-81.

[11] See ibid., p. 80.

[12] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[13] In the 2011-2012 Gerhard Richter retrospective *Panorama*, shown successively at the Tate Modern in London, the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Blanket was hung together with the *18 October 1977* cycle for the first time. See *Gerhard Richter – Panorama, une rétrospective*, ed. by Camille Morineau, exh. cat. Paris, Centre Pompidou, 2012.
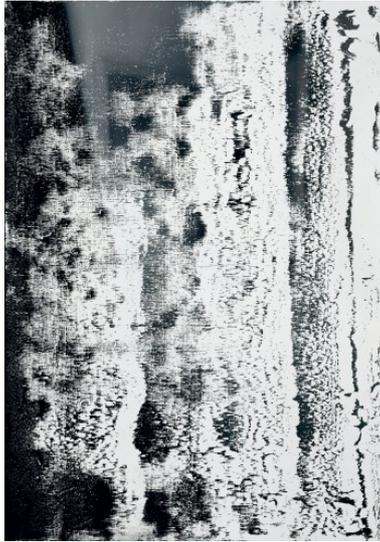
1 *Blanket*, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm, 1988

2 *Hanged*, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm, 1988

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Storr has suggested that the white overpainting is "equivalent to covering a corpse with a sheet or blanket".[14] Stefan Aust, in his history of the Baader-Meinhof Group, reveals that a blanket indeed played a role at the moment of the discovery of Ensslin's body: when the medical orderly Soukop entered Ensslin's cell on the morning of 18 October 1977, "he saw two feet hanging down under a blanket draped over the right-hand window of the cell".[15] Richter, who had read Aust's book with attention, may well have noticed this detail.[16] However, I am less interested in merely seeing the paint as a referential motif pointing to a specific blanket than in the way in which the overpainting, like the blanket, plays with our struggle to decipher the image and our desire to see beyond it. Despite its overpainting, therefore, Blanket does not appear as a "veil-image"

[14] Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter: October 18, 1977*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2000, note 3, p. 115.

[15] Aust, 1987 (note 5), p. 5.

[16] Aust's book, which was published in German in 1985 (*Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, Hamburg, Hoffmann & Campe, 1985), may well have been one of the late triggers for Richter's decision to paint the cycle.

(Didi-Huberman's fetish, whose pleasing but illusory appearance hides the truth of reality), but as its opposite, the "tear-image", in which a "dialectic stirring together the veil with its rip" takes place.[17]

As the conceptual duo tear-image/veil-image indicates, Didi-Huberman grounds the problem of the Auschwitz photographs in a dialectic of truth and illusion. The main question posed by the four photographs analysed (and by extension, by any material documenting the Holocaust) is whether photographic images usurp, or, on the contrary, provide knowledge of this historical moment. While the same problem pertains to any photographic record of reality, this question is – though for different reasons – all the more relevant in the case of the RAF photographs. These widely-publicised images were far from being unproblematic or transparent representations of the events. In fact, it is legitimate to ask whether these reproductions of photographs – selected and formatted by the government and the press – did not, due to their constructed nature, obscure the events rather than reveal them.[18] It could be argued, therefore, that by choosing to paint the cycle from these images, Richter rather points to the gap, or discrepancy, between the recording of a historical moment and the "truth" of that moment.

However, I believe that 18 October 1977 asks a different question. If the historical context in which the photographs were produced conditioned their presentation, circulation and reception, the same is valid for Richter's paintings. Produced almost ten years after the events, the paintings sought less to capture the historical truth of an October night in 1977 than to ask how, in 1988, the German people could relate, if at all, to this moment of past history. The problem of the representation of the RAF in 1988, I therefore suggest, is chiefly one of memory.[19] Moreover, the question of memory is complicated by what the German art historian Stefan Germer has termed the "psychic and political repression" that surrounded the end of the RAF and the political questions the movement raised, specifically, what attitude should the German people have, not only towards the Nazi crimes, but also towards the perpetrators, who had been re-integrated in German society?[20] Memory, in this context, is inextricably linked to the refusal, or inability, to remember. It is bound, in short, to its apparent opposite, forgetting. Richter's 18 October 1977, as I will argue in the remainder of this paper, takes on this very issue, and asks the following question: Via which mediation could the viewer, in 1988, access the reality of the RAF and the Stammheim deaths? Or, in other words, under which conditions can a visual (here painterly) representation of the RAF function as, to borrow Siegfried Kracauer's term, a

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[17] Didi-Huberman, 2008 (note 6), p. 80.

[18] I am referring here to the definition of "representation" as an ideological construction. See Stuart Hall's analysis of the media as the "production of consent – shaping the consensus while reflecting it", in "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': Return of the Repressed in Media Studies", in Michael Gurevitch et al. (eds), *Culture, Society and the Media*, London, Methuen, 1982, p. 87.

[19] In this, Richter's *18 October 1977* is part of the German political and cultural context of the 1980s, which favoured issues of memory and national identity (one obvious example of this would be Anselm Kiefer's works dealing with the history of the Third Reich). Richter, however, does not quite fit this narrative: instead of painting something linked to the Third Reich – the critical representation of which had become acceptable by the late 1980s – he tackles a moment of German history which had so far led to but few attempts at *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the "coming to terms with the past" of the post-war period), namely the history of the Red Army Faction.

[20] Stefan Germer, "Unbidden Memories", in *Gerhard Richter. 18. Oktober 1977*, exh. cat. London, ICA/Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1989, p. 7.

"memory-image"?[21]

3 *Funeral*, oil on canvas, 200 x 320 cm, 1988

4 *Cell*, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm, 1988

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My claim that the 18 October 1977 paintings take up the issue of memory and its immediate correlate, forgetting, rests on what I identify as the coexistence in the paintings of the erasure and re-emergence of the depicted subjects. In order to demonstrate this point, it is to an analysis of the painterly blur that I now propose to turn. Richter's "blur", as I will show, needs to be recognised not as one generic trope, but as different formal practices, which in turn possess different meanings. In the October cycle, the brushstrokes create a horizontal blur in Funeral (fig. 3), Arrest 1 and Arrest 2, and Youth Portrait, in an apparent continuation with the blur from Richter's 1960s photo-paintings (in particular, though not exclusively, those dealing with historical subject matter). Cell (fig. 4), which depicts Andreas Baader's prison cell, is the sole

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[21] Kracauer opposes the "memory-image" to the photograph, which negates the passage of time: "What the photographs, by their sheer accumulation, attempt to banish is the recollection of death, which is part and parcel of every memory-image. In the illustrated magazines the world has become a photographable present, and the photographed present has been entirely eternalised", in "Photography (1927)", in *Critical Inquiry*, no. 19, Spring 1993, p. 433. According to this definition, only a true "memory-image" would provide a faithful representation of history.

painting in the cycle to be blurred through vertical brushstrokes: the floor and bookcases recede into a waterfall of paint, negating the spatial depth of the depicted room. In both cases (horizontal and vertical), the effect of the blur is one of erasure and, when pushed to its limit, abstraction.

Yet there is a third kind of blur, which engages the dialectic of memory and forgetting in another manner, namely the "soft-focus" effect that softens the outline of the depicted figures. Richter uses this third type of blur to various effects. In Confrontation 1, Confrontation 2 and Confrontation 3 (figs. 5, 6, 7), this blur lends a photorealist aspect to the three portraits. The softening of the figure emphasises the fleetingness of the moment when the photographs were taken – that same moment from which, in the paintings, Ensslin seems to re-emerge. By contrast, in Hanged, Ensslin's corpse is so heavily blurred that it is almost entirely erased into the background of her cell. What links the blur in these two examples, however, is its distinctly photographic aspect: whereas in Funeral and Cell the direction of the brushstrokes (horizontal or vertical) is constitutive of the blur, in the Confrontation triptych and Hanged the brushstrokes are hardly noticeable at all. Here, the blur bears no trace of its painterly origin.

Moreover, a comparison between the Confrontation triptych and Hanged shows that this "photographic" blur is absolutely continuous: however blurred Ensslin's corpse becomes in Hanged, its shape consistently resists being engulfed by the paint and never quite disappears. This, I believe, is a play on the photographic origin of the painting: due to the indexical nature of the photograph, there is no definite tipping point when a blurred portrait ceases to become figurative and becomes completely abstract. But, more crucially for my argument, the photographic blur is also emblematic of the refusal to oppose the erasure and the re-emergence of the depicted subjects both in the paintings and in the collective consciousness: in short, of the refusal to oppose memory and forgetting.

By showing that the notion of memory is inextricably linked to that of forgetting in 18 October 1977, I do not wish to claim that the paintings simply mirror a sociological reality – the deadlock of political and psychological repression alluded to by Germer. Rather, the dialectical way in which memory and forgetting coexist in the paintings is in fact the very condition by which the reality of the RAF may, a decade after the events, become accessible to the viewer, turning the paintings into tear-images. Ensslin's portraits in the Confrontation triptych demonstrate further how the coexistence of memory and forgetting is played out in the cycle. In particular, I suggest that Richter's painterly modifications of the source photograph, in making Confrontation 2, have formal affinities with what Walter Benjamin has identified as the "aura" of certain early photographic portraits.

Richter's major departure from the photographic source first appears in the cropping of the image. Whereas the photograph shows Ensslin in full length, the painting crops the figure just below the waist (fig. 8). The resulting painting is strongly reminiscent of the photographic format of the nineteenth century portrait, in particular that used by Nadar for the series of artist portraits he began around 1850 (his famous portraits of Camille Corot, Franz Liszt, Charles Baudelaire and others all share the same format).[22] Crucially, Richter also modifies the lighting of the original photograph. In the source photographs taken at a police line-up, the whiteness of Ensslin's face, hands and legs, as well as the shadow projected on the wall behind her, indicate

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[22] I thank Dana MacFarlane for bringing my attention to Nadar's portraits of Baudelaire.

that she is caught in the beam of a bright artificial light. In the painting, Richter dramatises this effect by darkening Ensslin's torso and hair, the shadow against the wall behind her and the background. As a result, the young woman's face shines out, as if bathed in a strange, halo-like light – an effect which is emphasised by the slight blurring of the image.

5 *Confrontation 1*, oil on canvas, 112 x 102 cm, 1988

6 *Confrontation 2*, oil on canvas, 112 x 102 cm, 1988

7 *Confrontation 3*, oil on canvas, 112 x 102 cm, 1988

8 Gudrun Ensslin, 1972. Photographic model for *Confrontation 2*, with hand notations by Richter, from the artist's notebook.

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The emergence of Ensslin's artificially-lighted face is comparable, I wish to suggest, to Benjamin's description of early photographs in which the "aura" of the sitters is expressed through prolonged exposure, producing the impression of "light struggl[ing] out of darkness".[23] "There was", writes Benjamin of the early photographed subjects, "an aura about them, a medium that lent fullness and security to their gaze even as it penetrated that medium. And once again the technical equivalent is obvious: it consists in the absolute continuum from the brightest light to the darkest shadow."[24]

In his essay "Little History of Photography" (1931), from which this definition is taken, Benjamin describes the aura of the people portrayed as the coincidence of two things. On the one hand was the limited technology of early photography, which could not entirely master this "darkness"; on the other, a sociological quality of the sitters, namely that of the "rising class" of the bourgeoisie, whose members were "equipped with an aura that had seeped into the very folds of the man's frock coat or floppy cravat".[25]

For the purpose of my argument, I now wish to bring Benjamin's description of the "technical equivalent" of the aura in dialogue with a later characterisation of the term. In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1940) Benjamin describes the aura as "the associations which, at home in the mémoire involontaire, tend to cluster around the object of a perception […]".[26] The experience of the aura, in this definition referring to the

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[23] Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography", in Michael W. Jennings et al. (eds), *Selected Writings*: *Volume 2, 1927-1934*, Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 516.

[24] Ibid., pp. 515-517.

[25] Ibid., p. 517.

[26] Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", in Michael W. Jennings et al. (eds), *Selected Writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940*, Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 337. By focusing on these two definitions, I consciously avoid Benjamin's most famous definition of the aura stated in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in order to stay away from a definition of the aura that is grounded in the opposition between painting and photography/film. In this, I follow Diarmuid Costello in arguing that the aura and its decline are not medium-specific, but tied to the changing quality of experience in modernity (see Diarmuid Costello, "Aura, Face, Photography", in

Proustian involuntary memory, is rendered possible by a certain quality of memory, namely the spontaneous recollection summoned by a chance encounter with an object or image. Here, Benjamin identifies Proust's involuntary memory with the mechanism of traumatic experience (following Freud's description in Beyond the Pleasure Principle), in which only what has not been consciously experienced can be truly remembered. In this respect, Benjamin therefore ties the aura to a memory experience partly constituted by forgetting:

> "Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory? […] When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of the carpet of lived existence, as woven into us by forgetting. However, with our purposeful activity and, even more, our purposive remembering, each day unravels the web, the ornament of forgetting."[27]

Involuntary memory, which Benjamin describes as the "weaving" together of remembering and forgetting, is the very condition of an authentic experience of the past, of which the aura is but one manifestation. By contrast, voluntary memory is tied to the intellect: it is linked to facts, dates and photographs, but the information it gives does not bridge the gap between past and present. In an analogy with Benjamin's reasoning, we could argue that the photographic sources for the *October* paintings, which were published on several occasions in the German press between 1976 and 1980, precisely failed to bridge the gap with the past.[28] The blunt photographs of the corpses published in illustrated magazines did not allow the German public to come to terms with the traumatic deaths that occurred at the Stammheim Prison.

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However, it would be a mistake to think that Richter's *October* paintings function against photography – and this is the limit of this analogy. As I have shown, the blurring, cropping and darkening in fact connect with the photographic medium, not as the warrant of photographic realism, but as that which inaugurates, in their "auratic" aspect, a direct connection with the past. In "Little History of Photography", Benjamin spends some time detailing Karl Dauthendey's photograph *Karl Dauthendey (father of the Poet) with His Fiancée*. The reproduction shows the young woman's white face shining against the frame of her black hair, and her light dress and veil contrasting with the darkness of the wall behind her – not unlike Ensslin's figure in *Confrontation 2.* To Benjamin, this photograph already bears the trace of a tragic future event: the suicide of the young woman depicted.

The way in which the common theme of suicide links the fates of Ensslin and Karl Dauthendey's wife is, of course, anecdotal. In fact, we now know that Benjamin is incorrect: the woman in the photograph is

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Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and Art,* London, Continuum, 2005, pp. 164-184). This is why photography can be tied both to the decline of the aura (in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction") and to the production of the aura (in "Little History of Photography").

[27] Walter Benjamin, "On the Image of Proust", in Jennings, 1999 (note 23), p. 238.

[28] Not only at the time of the RAF members' death, but also three years later, on the occasion of renewed inquiry into the death of Andreas Baader. See Gerhard Kromschröder, "Der Fall Stammheim", in *Stern*, no. 45, October 1980.

Dauthendey's second wife, whereas it was his first wife who committed suicide.[29] Yet, turning back to *18 October 1977*, Benjamin's error proves productive. The *October* paintings – confusing past, present and, depending on the order we encounter them, future – enact a new dynamic akin to the one Benjamin thought to have read in Dauthendey's photograph, in which we are tempted to look "for the inconspicuous spot where, in the immediacy of the long-forgotten moment, the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it".[30] Richter's return to history painting, therefore, neither celebrates the triumph of painting over photography, nor does it simply identify photography as the condition of such a return. Rather, it redefines the role of painting by referring to the history of photography and by emphasising the complexity of that medium's purported "realism". The *18 October 1977* paintings, in their elusive connection with photography, remain open to what we, as viewers, may "rediscover" in them.

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[29] André Gunthert's first French publication of "Little History of Photography", in *Études photographiques* 1 (November 1996) contains important editorial notes. He specifies, note 16: "Benjamin makes here an extremely interesting mistake. Max Dauthendey's book of memories briefly relates the death of his father Karl's first wife, in 1855. The story continues immediately with the description of an older photograph of the young couple, kept by Max's half-sister, commented thus: 'As yet one sees no trace of the future unhappiness in this image, aside from that my father's gaze, sombre and insistent, reveals a youthful brutality, which may wound this woman who attentively looks at him.' But it is not the same woman: the woman who appears next to the photographer in Bossert & Guttmann's book is Karl Dauthendey's *second* wife, Miss Friedrich (1837-1873), whom he would marry two years later. Superimposing the narrative description of a photograph onto the image before his eyes, Benjamin mistakes one wife for the other, and, borrowing the technique of 'retrospective prophecy' from the poet, he transfers it from the masculine to the feminine gaze, thus constructing a complex, but completely phantasmagorical interpretation." (Translation mine.)

[30] Benjamin, 1999 (note 23), p. 510.