

## Memory as an Invisible Force?

*It does not seem to me, Austerlitz added, that we understand the laws governing the return of the past, but I feel more and more as if time did not exist at all, only various spaces, interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like, and the longer I think about it the more it seems to me that we who are still alive and unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision.*

...

*For instance, if I am walking through the city and look into one of those quiet courtyards where nothing has changed in decades, I feel, almost physically, the current of time slowing down in the gravitational field of oblivion. It seems to me then as if all the moments of our life occupy the same space, as if future events already existed and were only waiting for us to find our way to them at last, just as when we have accepted an invitation, we duly arrive in a certain house at a certain time. And might it not be, continued Austerlitz, that we also have appointments to keep in the past, in what has gone before, and is for the most part extinguished, and must go there in search of places and people who have some connection with us on the far side of time, so to speak?*

From W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, pp.185 and 257



