WORD, IMAGE & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIOGRAPHY IN W.G. SEBALD'S *AUSTERLITZ* (2001)

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ABSTRACT

WORD, IMAGE & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIOGRAPHY
IN W.G. SEBALD'S *AUSTERLITZ* (2001)

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This thesis is an attempt to uncover interaction of interdisciplinary practices in the process of writing architectural histories. For this purpose, it examines W.G. Sebald's last prose work *Austerlitz* (2001) in the light of some concepts such as "death" and "afterlife". It traces the textual and visual narrative of the work together and places this narrative at the intersection of architectural history writing and literary writing. What Sebald's *Austerlitz* offers is an untraditional way of represention of the built environment, locating it within its social and cultural backgrounds. While containing significant amount of architectural criticism, yet this work reveals an understanding that there are multiple contexts that the built environment fits in. Revolving around the hidden or neglected histories, it questions "reality" and the status of the documentary material whether written or visual, and blends it with fiction, in other words it uses the opportunities of literature.

Keywords: Image, Text, Architectural Historiography, Death, Afterlife

ÖZ

W.G. SEBALD'IN *AUSTERLITZ* (2001) ADLI KİTABINDA
YAZI, GÖRÜNTÜ VE MİMARLIK TARİHİ YAZIMI

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Bu çalışma, mimarlık tarihi yazımı sürecinde disiplinler arası etkileşimin anlaşılmasına yönelik bir girişimdir. Bu amaçla da W.G. Sebald'ın son düz yazı eseri *Austerlitz* (2001)' i "ölüm" ve "sonraki yaşam" gibi kavramlar üzerinden inceler. Bu süreçte, yazınsal ve görsel anlatıların izlerini takip ederek, mimarlık tarihi yazımı ile edebi yazın sürecinin kesişiminde nasıl etkileştiklerini kendisine konu edinir. Bu bağlamda, Sebald'ın *Austerlitz*'i gelenekselin dışına çıkarak sosyal ve kültürel zeminleriyle incelenmiş bir yapılı çevre tasviri sunar. Hatırı sayılır bir mimarlık kritiği sunmanın yanında, bu çalışma, yapılı çevrenin aynı anda birden fazla bağlamının olduğunu unutulmuş ve gözardı edilmiş tarihlerine değinerek göz önüne serer. Böylelikle, "gerçeklik" kavramını ve yazılı ya da görsel belgelerin pozisyonlarını sorgular ve kurmaca yazınla harmanlar; başka bir deyişle edebiyatın olanaklarından yararlanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Görüntü, Yazı, Mimarlık Tarihi Yazımı, Ölüm, Sonraki Yaşam

To Hera,
who loves to nibble all the paper work

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INTRODUCTION

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1.1.1 Personal Life & Works

Born in Wertach im Allgau, Germany, in May 1944, W.G. Sebald spent his early years in rural Franconia, in southern Germany, in the foothills of the Alps. He studied German language and literature – with interests, amongst other things, in Kafka and post-war Austrian literature and theatre – at the University of Freiburg, receiving his degree in 1965. Later on, he worked as a lector at the University of Manchester, between 1966 and 1969. In 1970, he began to give lectures at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England, and continued for nearly thirty years. He gained the degree of professorship in European literature in 1987, and from 1989 to 1994, he worked as the first director of the British Centre for Literary Translation.

His first major writing was a poetry book titled *After Nature (Nach der Natur)* and published in 1988. It was followed by *Vertigo (Schwindel)* in 1990 and although it is classified as a novel, just like the rest of his works, it displays hybrid characteristics in its four sectioned arrangement. Two similar prose books followed it; *The Emigrants (Die Ausgewanderten)*, published in 1992, and *The Rings of Saturn (Die Ringe des Saturn)*, published in 1995. Three

years later, he released *A Place in the Country (Logis in einem Landhaus)* – a compilation of six essays, each devoted to a specific writer or artist: *A Comet in the Heavens* on Johann Peter Hebel; *J'Aurais Voulu Que Ce Lac Eut Été L'océan* on Jean Jacques-Rousseau; *Why I Grieve I Do Not Know* on Eduard Morike; *Death Draws Nigh, Time Marches On* on Gottfried Keller; *Le Promeneur Solitaire* on Robert Walser, and finally, *As Day and Night* on Jan Peter Tripp. His most known work *On the Natural History in Destruction* (*Luftkrieg und Literatur: Mit einem Essay zu Alfred Andersch)* came out in 1999. It is consisted of essays on literature and writers in which he discusses Germans in the World War II. In the German edition, there are two essays – one is on meagre portrayal in culture of the bombings of German cities during World War II, titled *Air War and Literature* and the other is on Alfred Andersch, titled *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. On the other hand, in the English version two shorter essays on Jean Améry (*Against the Irreversible*) and on Peter Weiss (*The Remorse of the Heart*) are added. Right before he died in a car crash near Norwich in December 2001, his final work *Austerlitz* was published and it was considered the most novelistic in character when compared to the earlier ones. In the United States, it won the *National Book Critics Circle Award* (2001) for fiction and the *Salon Book Award* (2001). In the UK, it won the *Independent Foreign Fiction Prize* (2002) and the *Jewish Quarterly-Wingate Literary Prize* (2002). Also in 2002, Anthea Bell won *Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize*, awarded by the Goethe-Institut in Chicago, for her translation of *Austerlitz* into English. Among his other international awards, including the *Los Angeles Times Book Award*, the *Berlin Literature Prize*, and the *Literatur Nord Prize*, another essay book *Campo Santo* (2003) and two more poetry books – *Unrecounted* (2003) and *Across the Land and the Water: Selected Poems* (2008) – were released after his death.

1.1.2 Literary Style

Even though Sebald began his literary career in his forties, he pursued a very productive literary life. In an attempt to understand Sebald's practice, it should be indicated that the most important formative influence which developed Sebald's prose is his reading of the nineteenth-century German prose by writers such as Theodore Fontane, Gottfried Keller, and Adalbert Stifter.[1] In addition to the ones to which Mark R. McCulloh refers, Sebald also carries influences of some other writers such as Henri Proust, Henry James, Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Vladimir Nabokov, Franz Kafka, Primo Levi and Thomas Bernhard. For example, Sebald's straightforward descriptive style and the unsettling mood of his works are mostly associated with Kafka. According to McCulloh, the narrative simplicity that Sebald employs also serves to the intensification of uncanniness. On the other hand, the conceptual legacy reflected in Sebald's writing in terms of the aesthetics of inaction and paradoxical dynamic of statis are linked to Samuel Beckett and more importantly to Walter Benjamin,[2] while his specific quietness, his usage of the principle of exaggeration and particular brand of literary extremism as periscopic writing are related directly to Bernhard. Yet, as McCulloh emphasizes, "Sebald does not dwell on the repellent and disgusting with as much 'periscopic' detail and elaboration, but tends to treat them with succinctness and brevity before moving on."[3]

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[1] Mark R. McCulloh, "The Stylistics of Statis: Paradoxical Effects in W.G. Sebald", *Style*, 38.1 (2004), p.43

[2] McCulloh, 2004, p.43

[3] Mark R. McCulloh, "Blending Fact, Fiction, Allusion, and Recall", *Understanding W.G. Sebald* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), p.17-18

Considering them as a whole, James Chandler explains that Sebald has become something of a literary phenomenon for the turn of the twenty-first century, through his interest in the mnemonic imagination that is obsessed with the German failure to deal with the terrible events of the era into which he was born.[4] Manfred Jugensen props this view by adding that Sebald's works are considered already to be a part of a new body of global English-language writing formed by many so-called ethnic authors. These are either by translation – Günter Grass, Isabel Allande, and others – or in the shared native tongue of the Commonwealth such as Salman Rushdie and Michael Oondatje.[5] However, while his reading of one's inherited, native literary history, Sebald's works demonstrate a critical approach towards complex, so called "alienated" transnational social and cultural identities. Manfred Jugensen reads this attempt as a result of his writing in his native language while teaching and living in a foreign language culture which in the end led to increase his alienation.[6] Parallel to his own condition, Sebald in his all works, studies existential exile, not mass killing because he considers that their cultural memory is not bound to twelve years of the Hitler regime, rather it emerges from a wide spectrum within the present and the Enlightenment.[7] On that account, despite Sebald considers himself specifically *not* a Holocaust writer, Manfred Jugensen claims that his writing remains essentially German where he stands as "a travelling, expatriate German writer, who invokes and reflects on foreign cultural

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[4] James Chandler, "About Loss: W.G. Sebald's Romantic Art of Memory", *The South Atlantic Quarterly,* 102.1 (2003), p.241

[5] Manfred Jugensen, "Creative Reflection: W.G. Sebald's Critical Essays and Literary Fiction", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.416

[6] Jugensen, 2009, p.416

[7] Mark M. Anderson, "The Edge of Darkness: On W.G. Sebald", *October*, 106.1 (2003), p.104 *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan 2015

environments in the recognisably native vocabulary and overall concept of German literary history."[8] So, according to him, the English translations of his prose demonstrate a contrast in stylistic aura, literary-historical allusion and syntactic movement between the native text and its re-imagined narrative conversion.[9]

On the other hand, Sebald's ouvre which falls directly into the post-modern era – when considered chronologically and in the treatment against the conventional narrative forms – also differs from the characteristics of many post-modernist writings. For example, as McCulloh and John Zilcosky similarly note, Sebald's early works – both essays and novels that date back 1990s – contain a decidedly modernist fashion. Only his last work, *Austerlitz*, adopts romantic and a more conventional post-modern model, which he considers the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of Holocaust presentation. This shift is very much associated with journey and travel, while in the modernist fashion, traveller – uncannily – no matter how far away s/he journeyed, could never really leave her/his "home", in postmodernist understanding, Sebald's characters can only get lost. However, McCulloh recalls that Sebald's claim is not the impossibility of returning home, where we are all hopelessly lost. Rather he demonstrates how disorientations never lead to new discoveries, only to a series of uncanny, intertextual returns. Sebald's characters in that sense are seen as "postmodern nomads desperately lost at the turn of the twenty-first century".[10] The same manner of being lost and found is also pertinent for

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[8] Jugensen, 2009, 417

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] McCulloh, 2003, p.19 and John Zilcosky, "Lost and Found: Disorientation, Nostalgia and Holocoust Melodrama in Sebald's Austerlitz", *MLN*, 121.3 (2006), pp.680-681 *Project MUSE*. Web. 10 Jan. 2015

forgetting and remembering. Yet Sebald's works differ in their treatment. For example, in *The Emigrants,* remembering and forgetting are used within the framework of unreachable and unrecoverable fragments of the past, whereas in *Austerlitz* unlike the earlier texts, the process of forgetting appears only as a gesture towards the unrecoverability of history. Because, as Zilcosky explains, *Austerlitz*'s – as a book – concerns about "How we know and how we remember and what it is we find in the end," despite the indeterminacy of history, lead to a discovery of all the major details of long lost pasts, yet prove that returning home and remembering are still possible in the romantic paradigm.[11] It is this vision that makes Sebald interested in both nineteenth century German literature and Austrian literature, which is directly preoccupied with loss of identity, certainty and belonging. According to Sebald, the determining influence of one's native origin cannot be overcome even by the most concerted attempts to escape it. Therefore, reworking through the writers who are historically alienated from contemporary mainstream culture, he purposely remains within the realms of that shared native literary history.[12]

It is a way of dealing with man-made catastropes and it is closely linked with trauma. Sebald's prose, which always consciously avoids generalizations, follows West German documentary literature of the 1960s and 1970s that adopts a kind of realism. Yet this realism, according to him, can function only if it goes beyond its boundaries by blurring the boundaries between "fact" and "fiction". Eluding the uncertainties of the modern age and the insufficiencies of the nineteenth century, this type of prose, namely fictional autobiography, has gained recognition as it has the possibility to reconstruct and resolve the

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[11] Zilcosky, 2006, p.692

[12] Jugensen, 2009, p.419

traumas created in the first half of the twentieth century. It is inextricable from three interrelated backgrounds or contexts: post-modernism, post-colonialism and a post-war legacy or consciousness.[13] And it is in these contexts that individual memory is considered to be a text which is built upon many intertextual relations over time.

What post-modernist fiction does with this complexity is to critique the grand narrative with innovative forms and techniques. On the other hand, trauma fiction, which emerges from post-modernist fiction, attempts to break formal boundaries and limitations of narrative, as Anne Whitehead explains, in order to reveal the damaging and distorting impact of the traumatic event.[14] So it is not surprising to see that post-modernists highlight the unplanned, accidental and the autonomous, in contrast to modernists who prefer the idea of coordinated planning.[15] These techniques very much overlap with Sebald's literary choice, as he mostly evokes the history of the Holocoust, which represents a rupture in historical continuity by problemetizing the relationship between past and present. To quote Whitehead; "The Holocoust past, that is to say, cannot be narrated in an objective mode without omitting all that is most significant to understanding its power over the present."[16] While trauma fiction

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[13] Sarah Edwards, "Remembering and Forgetting: Private And Public Lives in the Imagined Nation", *Writing The Modern City: Literature, Architecture and Modernity,* eds. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley (London: Routledge, 2012), p.24

[14] Anne Whitehead, "Introduction to Part II", *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p.82

[15] Sarah Edwards, "Anonymous Encounters: The Structuring of Space in Postmodern Narratives of the City", *Writing The Modern City: Literature, Architecture and Modernity,* eds. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley (London: Routledge, 2012), p.168

[16] Whitehead, 2004, p.83

uses new modes of referentiality, which work by means of figuration and indirection, according to Sue Vice, the other features - intertextuality, the narrator, plot and story - used by trauma fiction, are the same with the other novels.[17]

Intertextuality which is recognized as the hallmark of postmodernism provides mainly historical layering of Sebald's narratives. Ann Pearson explains its scope either as a condition under which all texts originate or as a practice that derives from appropriation and reauthoring of texts for new purposes. Intertextuality – formulated by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s and developed by Roland Barthes – thus presents a critical approach towards the concepts such as authorship, property and originality which is quite visible in Sebald's ouvre. According to Pearson, his intertextual practice challenges traditional notions of authorship and disrupts realist assumptions due to its constructed nature. [18] One of the most important figures for Sebald's intertextual construction is undoubtedly Vladimir Nabokov. Yet he is not only a fellow artist to be monumentalized or a thematic thread linking, as Leland De la Duranteye points out, but more importantly stands as a figure through whom Sebald poses his most fundamental questions about this constructedness of reality namely the "facts of fiction" and "fiction of facts".[19]

Also visual material which is extensively used in Sebald's most of the works contributes to this dichotomy. This documentary element in character can

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[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Ann Pearson, "'Remembrance... is Nothing Other Than a Quotation': The Intertextual Fictions of W.G. Sebald", *Comparative Literature*, 60.3 (2008), p.262-263. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan 2015

[19] Leland De la Durantaye, "The Facts of Fiction, or the Figure of Vladimir Nabokov in W.G. Sebald", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 45.4 (2008), p.426

become a rhetorical component. Pearson, touching upon Swales, states that just as the intertextual practice, visual elements, too, compromise the "truth" of the narrative, thus destabilizing the narrative's reality. This is why in Sebald's texts, the reader is kept constantly uncertain.[20]

In terms of the characteristics of the visual material, it can be said that Sebald uses "slow" images which are the opposite of the unabashedly trivial, hedonistic, immediacy-seeking images of pop culture. All; black and white, uncaptioned and often poorly lit or unfocused, reflect themselves as composed fragments of the real as they assert "their documentary nature through the lack of any overtly pleasing or merely interesting aesthetic quality."[21]

It should be noted that the integration of visual material into literary works is also the outcome of postmodern understanding. This attempt is due to a new kind of realism that began to be seen in European and American literature in the mid 1960s and the early 1970s, which incorporates actual pictures into the typographic text, not as mere illustrations but rather as constitutive, non-supplementary parts of the whole. Mark M. Anderson provides an insight about this turn toward the image and as he explains, that image gains a problematic status after the Hitler period because the Nazis employed documentaries and other subsequent media tools of political gatherings, marches, the Führer's public arrivals and departures for propaganda purposes, which in the end contributed to an enormous, genocidal, visual lie.[22] The separation of historical fact from propaganda and visual representation emerged within its variety of

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[20] Pearson, 2008, p.264

[21] Mark M. Anderson, "Documents, Photography, Postmemory: Alexander Kluge, W.G. Sebald, and the German Family", *Poetics Today*, 29.1 (2008), p.138

[22] Mark M. Anderson, 2008, pp.129-130

possible meanings as the product of reading, re-reading, research and reflection. In that sense, the compelling mix of image and verbal narrative in Sebald's works fit in but also criticize the politicized, documentary phase of West German literature during this period.

Sebald's writing, in the form of prose, collages textual and visual narratives through a number of interwoven methods, then becomes a type of genre that blurs the line between historiography, autobiography, photo album, travelogue and fiction. All four books – *Vertigo*, *The Emigrants*, *The Rings of Saturn* and *Austerlitz* – share this feature. Being presented by a first-person narrator whose circumstances remind of Sebald, his works first evoke the feeling of documentary style through its descriptive and factual treatment, yet it soon becomes clear that they are not. Within this framework, in the process of understanding Sebald, the hybridity of his works inevitably leads critics to try to locate him in a literary scala, although Walter Benjamin warns that "literary ideas cannot be found in deduction from rules of genres".[23] Rolf Huges points out that this feature, which can be also be found in the works of Jan Zwicky and Mikhail Epstein, is due to the attempt to find the most direct, straightforward way of saying something complex and adds:

> … if this requires that sentences occasionally sign and dance, then this is the price of keeping language usable and audible for an often jaded readership. Similarly, if we lose our capacity to be surprised, to be taken aback, to be astonished (with all the reveals of expectations this implies), we have no means of escaping the monotonous repetition of our disciplinary and discursive heritage.[24]

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[23] Andrew Robinson, "Walter Benjamin and Critical Theory." *Ceasefire Magazine RSS*. 4 Apr. 2013. Web. 17 Aug. 2015.

[24] Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes. "A Room Within a View: A Conversation on Writing and Architecture", *OASE*, 70 (2006), p.65

In this study, however, *Austerlitz* is excluded from generating a new genre because its narrative structure is close to being much more traditional. The other works of Sebald become prominent to reflect the characteristics of journal-as-novel, the extended essay, the nuanced autobiography or the fictionalized memoir, all at once. In the end, having documentary quality is regnant for all of his works. It should be emphasized that naming Sebald's literary style as "documentary novel"[25] can be misleading, as Sebald himself does not consider himself a novelist. He says in an interview published in *Der Spiegel* in 2001 "I believe it is the junction between document and fiction where the most interesting things happen in literature."[26] On that account, sometimes his prose falls into the category of crime story, too. All the crimes referring to the Holocoust (*The Emigrants*), Belgian colonial atrocities (*The Rings of Saturn*), to local murders reported in newspapers, or as in *Austerlitz, "*architectural crime" of the Mitterrand Library in Paris, are shaped in Sebald's fiction in such a way that creates "faction".[27] According to McCulloh this dazzling hybridity is very much associated with postmodernist genre blending of Umberto Eco and Italo Calvino.[28]

Besides a variety of methods, insertion of naturalistic and ethical images of both animals and human beings is another characteristic that is seen in Sebald's ouvre. Depiction of household objects, clothing, other personal effects and buildings as emblems of human action is weaved into the narratives of Sebald

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[25] Mark R. McCulloh, "Introduction", 2003, p.xx

[26] Lynn L. Wolff, "Literary Historiography: W.G. Sebald's Fiction", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.322

[27] Mark R. McCulloh, "Blending Fact, Fiction, Allusion, and Recall", 2003, p.11

[28] Mark R. McCulloh, "Introduction", 2003, p.xix

to reveal the vulnerability and transience of human life, constituting a sort of "natural history" of them.[29] **(fig.1.1.1)** On the other hand, descriptions of animals and ethically loaded analogies between these two kinds are construed by both Alice Crary and Gay Hawkins, as a gesture towards the idea that suffering is indistinctive whether it is a human being or an animal. **(fig.1.1.2)** While Sebald's fascination with natural things is simultaneously biological, historical and political, as Hawkins emphasizes, the environment for Sebald is not a stage for human action. Against being passive or sacralised, natural logics organize humans and make them act in certain ways, which lead to a series of interlocking reciprocal relationships.[30] Revealing vulnerabilities, Sebald's narratives deal with naturalistic modes of thought in an untraditional way. Crary says:

> "the narratives invite us to take an interest in animate life in ways that, while resembling natural-historical thinking in being naturalistic, are also ethical in that they are essentially expressive of ethical value … and his narratives attempt to get us recognize pathos in the lives of individual humans whose development bears scars of social upheaval by juxtaposing depictions of these individuals with descriptions of individual animals who have likewise been prevented from fully living."[31]

To conclude, being learned from other writers and being worked throughout different contexts, Sebald uses three main techniques that characterize so much of his fiction, as McCulloh explains:

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[29] Alice Crary, "W.G. Sebald and the Ethics of Narrative", *Constellations*, 19.3 (2012), p.496

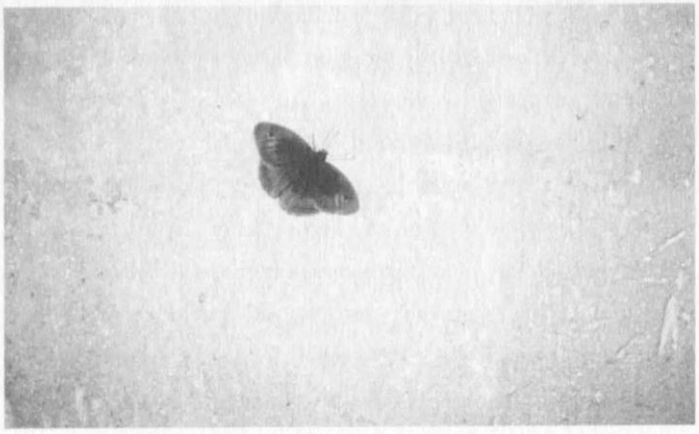
[30] Gay Hawkins, "History in Things – Sebald and Benjamin on Transience and Detritus", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.167

[31] Crary, 2012, pp.496-497

of my own poor state of health or because he was one of those bachelors who retain something boyish about them all their days. As far as I remember, I was overcome for a considerable time by my amazement at the unexpected return of Austerlitz. In any case, I recollect that before approaching him I had been thinking at some length about his personal similarity to Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the horror-stricken expressions on both their faces. I believe it was mainly the rucksack, which Austerlitz told me later he had

bought for ten shillings from Swedish stock in an army surplus store in the Charing Cross Road just before he began his studies, describing it as the only truly reliable thing in his life, which put into my head what on the surface was the rather outlandish idea of a certain physical likeness between him and the philosopher who died of the disease of cancer in Cambridge in 1951. Wittgenstein

Figure 1.1.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.40



until a draft of air detaches them and blows them into a dusty corner. Sometimes, seeing one of these moths that have met their end in my house, I wonder what kind of fear and pain they feel while they are lost. As Alphonso had told him, said Austerlitz, there is really no reason to suppose that lesser beings are devoid of sentient life. We are not alone in dreaming at night for, quite apart from dogs and other domestic creatures whose emotions have been bound up with ours for many thousands of years, the smaller mammals such as mice and moles also live in a world that exists only in their minds whilst they are asleep, as we can detect from their eye movements, and who knows, said Austerlitz, perhaps moths dream as well, perhaps a lettuce in the garden dreams as it looks up at the moon by night. I myself often felt as if I were dreaming during those weeks and months I spent at the Fitzpatricks' house, said Austerlitz, even in daylight. The view from the room with the blue ceiling which Adela always called mine did indeed verge on the unreal. I looked down from above on the treetops, mainly of cedars and parasol pines and resembling a

Figure 1.1.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.94

> Firstly he chooses antiquated, capacious, sometimes byzantine structures for his characters to explore as well as mazes. Secondly, he employs the device of repetition to draw out the moment in which one is 'on the brink'. And thirdly, he creates virtually imperceptible transitions into essayistic digressions.[32]

In this context, the device of repetition is one of the most important tools in terms of evoking the sense of *inescapability*. By this way, after effects of Holocoust – Sebald considers Holocaust itself as a symptom of modernity – are demonstrated within the minds of readers even if they were not geographically associated to its circumstances. While discussing Sebald's way of dealing with these traumas, Whitehead touches upon the relationship among modernity, time and space. Due to their association with exile and displacement, the relationship itself becomes "displaced" in character.[33] Tottering in this endless migration, it is through the use of repetition that a sense of forward movement is achieved. Not only through the repetition of lists of all sorts, chairs, books, railway stations, fashion, machines, landscapes and people but also through the repetition of echoes and coincidences, images and reflections, resonances and paradoxes, and with the shimmering interplay of memory, dream and reality, the archaic, muted and sober narrative is counterbalanced, in John Wiley's words, to create, in the end, a mesmeric discursive style.[34] It is collaborated not only with structural treatment but also with narrative relationships especially between the protagonist and the narrator. As Mark M. Anderson points out, the richly documented life of the protagonist which makes up the bulk of the story and the virtually invisible narrator to whom this story is told creates an

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[32] McCulloh, 2004, p.42

[33] Whitehead, 2004, pp.137-138

[34] John Wylie,"The Spectral Geographies of W.G. Sebald", *Cultural Geographies*, 14.2 (2007), p.175

unbalanced style, which is also directly reminds Bernhard's "periscopic" style that depends on reported, secondhand speech.[35]

In the process of understanding his ouvre, Sebald himself also states that he uses some strategies. One of them is the system of bricolage which is very much related to Levi Strauss. Expressed by Amir Eshel, bricolage in Strauss's conceptualization is a form of savage work of pre-rational thought. In order to make some sense, it needs to be nuzzled in the findings. Its origin is the French verb *bricoleur,* as Eshel conveys, that denotes an activity of order creation that is not based on thorough thought, but rather on using materials and tools that happen to be around. Bricoleur creates structures by means of events and in Sebald's poetics it finds itself as a generator of signs denoting the world.[36]

All these strategies help Sebald, who has only second-generation post memories, connect himself imaginatively to its participants. Unlike many German documentarists with authorial distance and alienated, cold tone – such as Kluge, Weiss, Grass and others – Sebald's writing is considered to be empathetic due to enabling "familiarization" by means of representing suffering from within. For example, throughout the works such as *The Emigrants* and *Austerlitz* there is a great sense of empathy shown by the narrator towards the tales of other figures. Achieving an emotionally neutral, report-like tone of voice, Sebald stands as neither objective nor cold.[37]

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[35] Anderson, 2003, p.106

[36] Amir Eshel, "Against the Power of Time: The Poetics of Suspension in W.G. Sebald's Austerlitz", *New German Critique*, 88.1 (2003), p.78

[37] Anderson, 2008, p.140

1.1.3 Architecture, Literature & Sebald

In another perspective, interdependent relationship between architecture and literature – playing with time, space and narrative – shows itself as architecture's being a subject to literature. In many modern literary works,[38] as well as Sebald's, bases of the narratives are constructed upon particular architectural settings. Interaction between built environment and literature is tried to be revealed by creating metaphors and identifying social contradictions thrown up by the late twentieth century forms of urbanisation.

Yet in terms of architecture and literature there is something different in Sebald's literary practice. With intertextual references to different literary figures and different narrative practices – the poetic mode blended by details, events and imaginative possibilities – Sebald aims to restructure the past mainly around the exploration of faculty of memory, and while transforming them into an artwork, he, who is always conscious that it is a present in the process of passing away, benefits crucially from the intersections of architectural and other types of narratives. As memories, whether personal or collective, are held within spaces, they become accessible through "memory places" or "sites of memory" that bear witness to the conflicts created by traumas.[39] Mainly concentrating on the relationship among memory, place and massive effects of traumatic events of history, Anne Whitehead says that although memory is strongly attached to a place, just as Sarah Edwards touches upon, the effect of trauma seems to destroy the symbolic function of place,[40] so

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[38] J.G. Ballard's novels like Drowned World (1962), Concrete Island (1974), High Rise (1975), Yevgeny Zamyatin's "We" as mentioned in Edwards and Charley, 2012, p.12

[39] Edwards, "Remembering and Forgetting", 2012, p.23

[40] Whitehead, 2004, p.10

they form non-places in the minds of survivors. It is interesting that although there are sites of materially embody collective memory, such as Jewish Museum in Berlin or the Menin Gate Memorial, their meanings shift over time as next generations develop new relationships, new rituals and new narratives about the site.[41] Moreover, those relations can be transferred through the objects and can haunt back the individuals, even if they have not been involved in the traumas. This concept, developed by Marianne Hirsh, is called "post memory". Accordingly, a number of questions are raised by Sarah Edwards such as "Who is remembering, why, and why now?, What form does this remembrance take – a monument, a memoir?, In the narrative of remembrance, which events have been included and which have been forgotten or erased?"[42] It is also a specific feature of postmodern practice. In the works of postmodern writers, these questions are examined and the meanings, as well as functions of spaces, are traced through their users' "mappings."[43] Furthermore, since psychogeography is a prominent feature in urban literature, the contemporary works on urban memory concentrate on those literary texts to understand the ways in which history is shaped. These texts blur the distinction between novel and autobiography by means of being constructed through fictional devices. As biographies and autobiographies are fundamentally inter-textual which limit and distort individual memory, then the relation of the individual self (part) to a communal identity (whole) becomes important, as Sophia Psarra notes.[44] In

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[41] Edwards, "Remembering and Forgetting", 2012, p.23

[42] *Ibid*., pp.22-24

[43] Edwards, "Anonymous Encounters", 2012, p.174

[44] Inga Bryden, "There Are Different Ways of Making the Streets Tell: Narrative, Urban Space and Orientation", *Writing The Modern City: Literature, Architecture and Modernity*, eds. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley (London: Routledge, 2012), p.223

that sense, Sebald makes critical attempts to locate German identity and memory within individual family histories in which probably most of the population experienced the reality of the regime. Yet instead of concentrating on the memory being passed down through the families, he rather considers the ones that are fractured or obliterated. So as Claire Feehily points out, "Stories are recovered, murdered identities restored and their histories passed on via texts, providing a parallel for those obliterated personal histories and the wider collective processes of denial and discovery in Europe." Thus challenging separation of German public memory, Sebald manages – particularly in *Austerlitz* – to reveal multiple perspectives of the dramatic closure of space between the perpetrator, the victim and "the home front".[45]

This spatial engagement with individual and collective memories draws the attention not only of the writers, but also of the architects. Because conceptual ordering, spatial narrative and social narrative act together to define urban space. Sarah Edwards discusses that conceptual establishment of those relationships, in the twentieth century urban theory, led many writers and architects – who viewed the city as a system of interconnected parts – to concentrate on "everyday life". In that sense, the theories of Henri Lefebvre (*The Production of Space*, 1974) and Miched de Certau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984), are very influential. For example, Lefebvre goes into a differentiation in the description of "space" as absolute space and social space. The first one is the imagined space of architects or writers, while the latter is the concrete, physical space, in which people inhabit on a daily basis.[46]

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[45] Claire Feehily, "'The Surest Engagement with Memory Lies in its Perpetual Irresolution'. The Work of W.G. Sebald as Counter-Monument", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.185

[46] Edwards, "Anonymous Encounters", 2012, p.169

However, when his principle of "codification" is taken into account, it is seen that these two are actually inseparable. Also in the search of the spaces related to social relations, Inga Bryden suggests to look at a narrative of ordinariness, rather than to rely on architectural landmarks in reference to Michel de Certeau's "rented paces". Actually by this way, alternative mappings and physical and mental orientations through the city become possible. Therefore, neglected and non-monumental sites that are beneath or beyond the "everyday" become accessible through the "everyday". In both cases travel, which is employed quite significantly in Sebald's works, becomes inevitable part of understanding and to a certain extent, representing urban space.[47]

Yet, it is not the "full" and "true" representation of any environment that is important. Because it is practically impossible to "capture the complexities of the urban experience," as Inga Bryden puts it. In this regard, it should be noted Jonathan Charley' quote of Bakhtin:

> There is a sharp and categorical boundary line between the actual world of representation and the world represented in the work. We must never forget this, we must never confuse – as been done up to know and is still often done – the represented world with the world outside the text.[48]

Charley then adds that all the works of art form a relationship with the social existence, in an ideological way, which may be partial, camouflaged or distorted. In contemporary urban literature and in urban theory, it is believed that reassembling fragments of the city becomes out of reach as the city itself

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[47] Bryden, "There Are Different Ways", 2012, p.215

[48] Jonathan Charley, "Time, Space and Narrative: Reflections on Architecture, Literature and Modernity", *Writing The Modern City: Literature, Architecture and Modernity,* eds. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley (London: Routledge, 2012), p.9

resists any kind of meta-narrative claiming to know what is exactly going on.[49] Metaphorically, the "mobile" characteristic of the city offers innumerous means of experience as there are endless routes to take. On this point, Bryden discusses Roland Barthes, Philip Tew and Peter Ackroyd. As they try to find ways to understand and represent a city, they establish a distinct architecture-literature relationship, even if they do not give a direct word. Barthes claims that in order to understand a city one must rip off the boundaries which see spaces only in terms of specialisation of functions. Therefore, decomposing microstructures are needed. It is like isolation of little fragments of phrases.[50] In this sense, the city becomes equal to writing and s/he who moves about the city becomes a reader according to Barthes. Ackroyd's association of streets with the lines of an endless book becomes a medium through which Tew believes that the fracturing or fractured relationships of an infinite possibilities can be explored.[51] Therefore travel itself becomes a narrative generator and by this way, it initiates a never-ending search for identity and a wayfaring of self-discovery as a meandering journey in time and place which corresponds to writing.

Walking – the very basic act of travel – which is a material aesthetic act, defines territory and looks for underlying patterns to reveal itself. Inga Bryden, touching upon Sinclair's style of writing, argues that it is the text of the streets – which is constructed around an order to develop the architecture of situated objects – which proves the most significant object, namely the urban space.[52]

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[49] Bryden, "There Are Different Ways", 2012, p.219

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid*., p.215

Acting as an act of documentation, walking within "a delirium of coded information" is very much the case in Sebald's most of the works. Travel takes place mostly when his characters begin to lose the sense of orientation which was provided by reading and writing . Due to the structure of the prose, the reader finds herself/himself in accompanying the characters in their journeys and in every juncture, encounters significant studied observations. Yet it should be noted that those journeys do not always constitute physical ones. Even during the times of mental paralysis, journeys through time and space take place. As John Wylie remarks, at the beginning of all Sebald's works there is a voyage, a journey of some kind.[53] However, Sebald's characters are in a way different from "flaneur" (or stroller). Indeed, in the case of *Austerlitz*, with a hazy background of unspecified but troubling events, the narrator and the protagonist become "stalker" which is explained by Sinclair as a kind of "stroller who knows where he is going, but not why or how". By this way desire paths originate where the conventional street map becomes inoperative.[54] Strolling around consists not only finding but also of getting lost. Sebald's earlier works, as well as *Austerlitz*, all revolve around the theme of "journey home" whether physical or mental. And in the case of *Austerlitz*, this journey takes place within the historical sites of Nazi crimes, in search for the ghosts of the past.

Sebald's texts, creating a sense of displacement around a narrative that never explains or fleshes out its own origins, initiates a more restless, rootless and meandering spatiality. [55] Being always on the move and exploring cities

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[53] Wylie, 2007, pp.175-176

[54] Bryden, "There Are Different Ways", 2012, p.220

[55] Wylie, 2007, p.176

intrigue Inga Bryden to ask "Are they nothing more than a complex web of stories?" by highlighting the close relationship of architecture with literature. According to her, literary texts encourage a kind of kinaesthetic response to place by means of the journeys that the characters engage in.[56] For this long neglected association, in which the reader becomes participatory audience in the city as a body of practices, Jonathan Charley quotes Franco Moretti that "It is only recent times that the geographical, spatial and architectural dimensions of literature have been acknowledged as a primary force in the development of a novel."[57] It is the characteristic of literature that without a certain kind of space, a certain kind of story is impossible. Drawing, as a medium, is essential for architecture, indeed, but in terms of verbal discourse "How are the insights drawn from a map or architectural drawing translated?" asks Katja Grillner, while discussing with Rolf Hughes about the intersections of architecture and literature. More than just translation, both agree that writing, in different modes, brings out 'the more obscure angles and relationships by putting things into a second, third (or eleventh) perspective, [58] and offers explorations and experimentations in understanding and describing space. Writing shapes "reality", by its very nature, giving it an order and produces an aesthetically formed one, as Mark R. McCulloh points out.

This can be explained by referring to Sarah Edwards, who expresses that not only the metaphors shared by those two interdisciplinary fields but also the formal strategies, which are called "building blocks of literary narratives", are used to "represent and shape one's bodily and psychic inhabitations of the

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[56] Bryden, "There Are Different Ways", 2012, p.224

[57] Charley, "Time, Space and Narrative", 2012, p.10

[58] Grillner and Hughes, 2006, pp.57-58

contemporary city."[59] In the process of production of meaning, both fields are compared to each other in terms of their relations between the respective sets of vectors, which operate in architecture as *topos*, *typos* and *tectonic*, while in literature, as David Spurr puts it, it finds its equivalence among *context*, *genre*, and *text.*[60] Other than those characteristics, spaces are directly put in question to figure out the intersections. In this sense architectural sites are compared to the historical and cultural contexts – namely *field of cultural production* [61] – in which a literary work intervenes. The same symbiotic, on the contrary, is not eligible for how an architect and a writer depict the modern city. The difficulties faced by the architects do not confine the writers in the representation phase. The writer is not bounded to the material reality thus s/he can play with 'the contradictions thrown up by the instrumental act of architect, urban designer, developer or politician'[62] By this way, what Charley claims as extraordinary urban and anti-urban visions, in the end, can be produced as the outcome of the possibilities of writing. Sarah Edwards also touches upon the same idea, which is actually an outcome of postmodern understanding. As she explains, "postmodern writers claim that the meanings of urban space are continually produced by writers and their readers, where cultural geographers also argue that space is both socially produced, and a condition of social production."[63]

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[59] Edwards, "Anonymous Encounters", 2012, p.167

[60] David Spurr, "Introduction", *Architecture and Modern Literature* (U.S.:The University of Michigan Press, 2012), p.5

[61] Charley, "Time, Space and Narrative", 2012, p.12

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] Edwards, "Anonymous Encounters", 2012, p.168

In the final analysis, it seems appropriate to recall Judith Kitchen's view about Sebald's space of writing which summarizes all. "a realm" she says, "where truth is indeterminate, the narrator is indirect, the characters are enigmatic, the story is inconclusive, and history is uncertain." He benefits from all these hidden complexities in the formulation of the radical insecurities related to contemporary history. And thus in entering Sebald's texts, the past becomes a part of an artwork that reveals itself as a complex web of traces in the world around the characters: in buildings, landscapes, documents and people's stories.

1.2 *Austerlitz* (2001)

In the briefest sense, W.G. Sebald's last work, *Austerlitz*, is said to be a prose text intertwined with visual material – photographs, reproduced images and maps and documents – which explores the connections between "public meeting places and individual histories within a framework of a biographical and literary reconstruction of a Jewish family's fate in Nazi Germany."[64]

It starts with a first-person narration, extremely vague, saying that he/she travelled a lot from England to Belgium. Without revealing any type of information of appearance or physical features of him/her, the narrator only aims to make the reader follow his/her excurcions that take place in the second half of the 1960s. One of these journeys leads to the city of Antwerp, Belgium, as the narrator expresses, which is described in a detailed way including street names the narrator passes by and the inhabitants of the zoo he/she visits. At this point, the reader engages not only in textual narrative but also gets introduced a variety of visual material. Facing the eyes of exotic creatures in the picture which seems to emphasize the nocturnal feeling this place causes,

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[64] *Ibid*., p.169

yet it is soon associated with another place *Salle des pas perdus* – the Ladies Waiting Room – in Antwerp Centraal Station, while the set of photographs – placed right under the photographs of the eyes of exotic animals – picturing the eyes, said to be of Ludwig Wittgenstein's, remain unexplained. Right afterwards, eloborated with an account of historical information, this place is approached as a continuation of Nocturama, where exotic animals are kept with an artificial setting demonstrating their homelands. Also this place is important because it is where the narrator meets Austerlitz, the protagonist of the book. Soon the combination of the eyes of animals and eyes of Wittgenstein is revealed to be leading to Austerlitz, as the narrator gives a variety of intertextual references to Wittgenstein to demonstrate Austerlitz's personality. **(fig.1.2.1)** Within his character, also Austerlitz's professional life is revealed as he and the narrator begin to talk about a variety of subjects. They are intriguing because all intersect with architectural histories, since Austerlitz is an architectural historian – lecturer at London Institute of art history[65] – with an interest in the architecture of the Capitalist Era, focusing on 19th century built environment. As the story develops, in the form of conversations between the narrator and Austerlitz, the topics that seem very much random begin to be weaved around Austerlitz's own history. The reader is acquainted with the protagonist's past identity in which Austerlitz, born in 1934, thought he was a child of Calvinist preacher, Emyr Elias and his timid-natured wife – Gwendolyn. Living in Bala, yet he was later on sent to a private school, named Stower Grange, near Oswestry due to the illness of his mother. It is a story that is told by the narrator quoting of Austerlitz and it continues with Austerlitz's telling the narrator, learning his real name in Stower Grange. Using the name *Dafydd Elias* without a query until that time, he soon meets an unfamiliar one:

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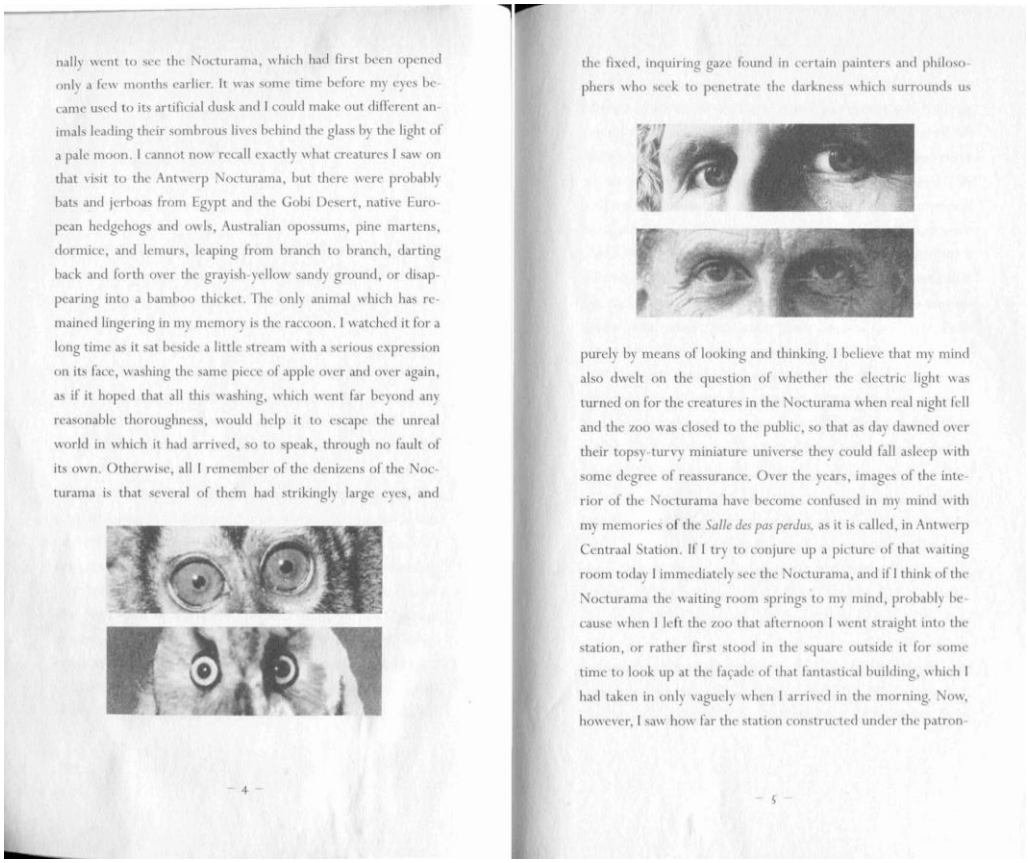
[65] W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.31



nally went to see the Nocturama, which had first been opened only a few months earlier. It was some time before my eyes became used to its artificial dusk and I could make out different animals leading their sombrous lives behind the glass by the light of a pale moon. I cannot now recall exactly what creatures I saw on that visit to the Antwerp Nocturama, but there were probably bats and jerboas from Egypt and the Gobi Desert, native European hedgehogs and owls, Australian opossums, pine martens, dormice, and lemurs, leaping from branch to branch, darting back and forth over the grayish-yellow sandy ground, or disappearing into a bamboo thicket. The only animal which has remained lingering in my memory is the raccoon. I watched it for a long time as it sat beside a little stream with a serious expression on its face, washing the same piece of apple over and over again, as if it hoped that all this washing, which went far beyond any reasonable thoroughness, would help it to escape the unreal world in which it had arrived, so to speak, through no fault of its own. Otherwise, all I remember of the denizens of the Nocturama is that several of them had strikingly large eyes, and

the fixed, inquiring gaze found in certain painters and philosophers who seek to penetrate the darkness which surrounds us

purely by means of looking and thinking. I believe that my mind also dwelt on the question of whether the electric light was turned on for the creatures in the Nocturama when real night fell and the zoo was closed to the public, so that as day dawned over their topsy-turvy miniature universe they could fall asleep with some degree of reassurance. Over the years, images of the interior of the Nocturama have become confused in my mind with my memories of the *Salle des pas perdus,* as it is called, in Antwerp Centraal Station. If I try to conjure up a picture of that waiting room today I immediately see the Nocturama, and if I think of the Nocturama the waiting room springs to my mind, probably because when I left the zoo that afternoon I went straight into the station, or rather first stood in the square outside it for some time to look up at the façade of that fantastical building, which I had taken in only vaguely when I arrived in the morning. Now, however, I saw how far the station constructed under the patron-

Figure 1.2.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.4-5

Jacques Austerlitz – A Prague Jew that was deported to England, in the year of 1939 through Kindertransport. After that, the narration concentrates more on Austerlitz's own struggle to find his parents, his own past. Accordingly, new characters and more and more architectural settings are introduced to the narrative. In the search of past, story always introverts and intersects with multiple occasions yet reaching nowhere in terms of a concrete result. As the book seems to follow the traces of the people, mainly Jews, in the period of 1940s – the reign of Nazis, with a critique of capitalism in particular and modernity in general, it does not try to uncover specific events or people, rather it covers a larger context on how one remembers, understands, traces and

represents, preventing making generalizations on purpose. In the end, the book always persists being vague and ambiguous.

In this respect, rather than the story itself, the text, constructed on the discursive interactions between the narrator and Austerlitz, culminating in a critical distance, becomes important in terms its structure – its characters, storylines and used materials – because it contains a considerable amount of data that needs to be decomposed into its parts.

1.2.1 Storylines

With regard to Sebald's textual construction based on a one full prose without chapters or any kind of episodes, even without paragraphs in the traditional sense, it seems difficult to see the divisions between the parts. However with a close-caption, it can roughly be said that, the story is constructed upon seven thematic encounters between the two major characters of the book: the anonymous narrator and Jacques Austerlitz. These encounters, which are based on their conversations, covers a time span starting from 1967 and finalizing in 1997. Creating a linear timeline, these encounters yet are not gradually uniform. To put it in other words, for example, the first set of encounters from the very first to the fourth comprises the time-span within 1967 spreading through the months and the second set – from fifth to seventh – occurs at the end of 1996, proceeding in 1997. Besides, within these encounters, there are smaller partions just as spreading over days. The first encounter is composed of three days: the two meet on the first day by chance in the Antwerp Centraal Station and on the second day by appointment and the third day continues with the narrator's being on his own. On the other hand, the second, the third, the fourth encounters consist of only one day, where the fifth and the sixth encounters are composed of two days meetings. **(Appendix A)**

Within this linear scheme, it is interesting that also Austerlitz has his own time-line. Although in the first and second day of the sixth encounter, Austerlitz depicts a gradual timeline of his own search, his whole past and present, which are given as hints in the fifth encounter and mostly revealed in the sixth encounter, stand as backs-and-forths in the chronological sense. So a level of unlinearity is introduced to the narrative. Yet, not limited to this, the encounters in themselves create a network of unlinearity, as different historical periods are put in question in those meetings. Just like Austerlitz's own time jumps, also the conversations between Austerlitz and the narrator create a maze of signs which leads the reader to take an active role in the process of reading. Because as Ann Pearson points out, within its narrative the reader becomes disoriented, reading backwards and forwards in order to decipher the multiplying instances.[66] **(Appendix B)**

These encounters are either by chance or by appointment – mostly decided by Austerlitz – and within these encounters there are even periods of time that the narrator spends alone just to explore the surrounding or to think about what Austerlitz just have said, so the reader see the narrator alone accordingly either right before they get together or after their meeting is over. **(Appendix C)**

In these times when the narrator is alone, the first person narration is quite visible but in other times when the narrator and Austerlitz are together, it is seen that the structure of the textual narrative, in terms of language, is closer to speech than it is to writing and the direct speech of the narrator, in the form of quoting, namely "said Austerlitz", "said Vera, said Austerlitz" etc. is the most dominating feature in the book. This phrase, called as "the text's irregular heartbeat" by Alexander Verdolini forms an indication of repetition and creates

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[66] Pearson, 2008, p.264

a mixture of direct and indirect discourse in a multiple organization. This technique, directly borrowed from Thomas Bernhard is used to emphasize narrative as an act of mediation[67] and thus it creates, for sure, a type of documentary impulse – composed of an auditory faithfulness and an attentive listenining – which is considered to be an indication of a true image of history's dense filigree.[68] Seems to tell all it once, *Austerlitz* is considered to be a reminiscent of the psychoanalytic talking cure by Kimberly Mair. On the other hand, through the text, while the narrator tells the story of Austerlitz, the voice of the narration becomes one of Austerlitz's. It is due to a shift from first-person account to a third-person indirect speech. Moreover these shifts in language do occur not only between the narrator and Austerlitz, but also within Austerlitz's own narration. He mentions his own story in the first-person, yet he uses third-person to describe the antiquated objects that interest him. However, in the end retaining the fluence in the reading activity, the figure of the narrator dissolves into Austerlitz or vice versa. In the end, only if Austerlitz says "I" again, the ambiguity is dissolved and the narrator's voice again becomes separable. Creating a state of having double narrators, Alexander Verdolini asks if this physical relationship within the text reveals a more problematic kind of attachment. Sebaldian narrator, as he quotes Eric Santner, becomes a person that writes himself into someone else's life story so that it seems almost to become about him. In the end the identities of the narrator and Austerlitz becomes one, literally moving into each other's places, thus reframes itself.

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[67] Kimberly Mair, "Arrivals and Departures in the Sensual City: W.G. Sebald's Itineraries of the Senses in *Austerlitz*", The *Senses and Society*, 2.2 (2007), p.244

[68] Alexander Verdolini, "Framework: On W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*", *MLN*, 128.3 (2013), pp.615-617. *Project MUSE*. Web. 15 Apr. 2014.

Recording of the exact time and place and the context of their encounters, also the development of their relationship, its interruption all create a sense of documentation. Also the reader's hearing this through the external voice of the narrator brings certain complexities to the text. Yet the text also reaches another level of complexity when travel is introduced as another parameter. It becomes possible to examine this organization scheme in terms of mobility or immobility. As can be seen below, the story starts with a sense of mobility, where the narrator mentions his routine excursion in the 1960s and directly after that he tells that he visits Belgium in one of those journeys. On the other hand, as the narrator and Austerlitz make appointments to see each other and talk, most of these encounters happen seated in certain places. It can be seen that most of the days are narrated either by strolling around with specific outcomes or sitting down in a place, yet it is not bound to these rather static shifts, also an encounter that starts with walk ends up in a bar of course always as the continuation of the act of monologue-like speech given by Austerlitz. Moreover, increasing the complexity level of the text, on some days although the narrator and Austerlitz engages in a standstill encounter, Austerlitz's story – his own timeline – contains total mobile characteristics. Thus, mobility in the form of walking or traveling by train becomes an inseparable part of the narrative, which acts as a narration style rather than a tool for reaching somewhere in the continuation of the plot. **(Appendix D)**

1.2.2 Characters

Within this labyrinthian setting, there more than ten characters in *Austerlitz* and each of them representing either a part of Austerlitz or a certain kind of viewpoint is introduced gradually into the narrative either to evoke questions or find certain types of answers. **(Appendix E)**

The very first character is of course the voice of the book – the narrator, as mentioned before. Sharing the characteristics of a general "Sebaldian narrator," yet it differs from his early novels in terms of authorial position, where as James Chandler notes, the narrator cedes his centrally authoritative position and many of its functions to Jacques Austerlitz.[69] Seeming at first as a gender free character, the narrator, who also pursues academic studies in the field of architecture, is reflected as a male figure – a mirror image of Jacques Austerlitz. Just as Austerlitz, he also had nervous breakdowns, he, as a preference, is said to be an eventual mediator of Austerlitz's life story.[70] On top of that, the narrator is also associated with Sebald himself who was also a professor, born in Germany and long lived in England.[71]

Emyr Elias is a Calvinist preacher and former missionary, living in the little country town of Bala in Wales, with his wife. They and their life in that country house – too large for two people – standing in isolation on a hill just outside the town remind Austerlitz of only unhappy times. He tells the narrator about his remembrance of locked doors which were extremely unfriendly. It is directly related to feeling of captivity, where Austerlitz had to go around dressed in the English fashion. The life in Bala was always uncomfortable for Austerlitz where the minister's wife was always busy with her housework, moving around like a ghost and the minister used to sit in his study having a view of a dark corner of the garden and usually thought about next Sunday's sermon. Austerlitz describes the capability of Elias, who deeply believes in the Last Judgment, to "fill the hearts of his congregation with sentiments of

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[69] Chandler, 2003, p.251

[70] Richard T. Gray, "Sebald's Segues: Performing Narrative Contingency in *The Rings of Saturn*", *The Germanic Review*, 84.1 (2009), p.27

[71] Chandler, 2003, p.251

remorse that at the end of the service quite a number of them went home looking white as a sheet."[72] He remembers Elias always with the ideas such as sinfulness, fire and ashes, punishment of mankind and so on but yet when he thinks of Calvinist eschatology, he does not see them as all connected to these biblical images of destruction. These ideas which seem rather insignificant at the time of reading actually prepare the reader to other types of sins and destructions. Moreover, they represent the developments of thoughts around a kind of Old Testament mythology of retribution. Yet he was always far more open-minded to the disturbing ideas around him. He mentions that he had a notion of imagining the past people's lives as they were narrated accordingly to Elias's own family and birthplace and moreover, Austerlitz always had an interest in the transition from life to death. He mentions that he sometimes imagined – re-animated in other words – the people from the photographs in the family albums of Elias "walking down the road in Bala, or out in the fields, particulary around noon on hot summer days, when there was no one else about and air flickered hazily."[73] These are the types of ideas that Austerlitz could not share with Elias due to his conservativeness, so at this point, another character, Evan is introduced to the narrative as recollection of memories. He was said to be the cobbler, whose workshop was not far from the manse. He is significant, because as he is described as a person who had a reputation for seeing ghosts, he directly creates an anti-personality of Elias. Spending most of his time with Evan, Austerlitz mentions that he was rather fond of these types of stories because as he recalls "Unlike Elias, who always connected illness and death with tribulations, just punishment and guilt, Evan told tales of the dead who had been struck down by fate untimely, who knew they had been cheated of

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[72] Sebald, 2001, p.46

[73] *Ibid*., p.53

what was due to them and tried to return to life."[74] This conceptualization of death which is marked as very Sebaldian, symbolizes a particular experience of the ghostly as Jessica Dubow and Richard Steadman-Jones notice. They emphasize that Elias and Evan create a rhetorical doubling – two fathers, two traditions, two varieties of the same language. Then Austerlitz becomes a symbol for split. Yet death and ghostly are key terms to bind all together.[75] They also represent an awakening for Austerlitz, who always related himself to Biblical stories but the other way around he always felt a state of dream that something very obvious, very manifest in itself was hidden from him. It is right before the death of foster parents and learning his real identity, so the dream state becomes real and Austerlitz begins to look for the meaning of his name.

Andre Hilary is another character who is a graduate of Oriel College and teaches European history in Stower Grange. Although Penrith-Smith, the headmaster of the school canalises Austerlitz's search of the meaning of his name towards the small place in Morovia, site of a famous battle, it is Andre Hilary that changes his inclination. As the narrator quotes Austerlitz, Hilary, who is familiar with every detail of the Napoleonic era,

> … brought it all vividly to life for us, partly by recounting the course of these events, often passing from plain narrative to dramatic descriptions and then on to a kind of impromptu performance distributed among several different roles, from one to another of which he switched back and forth with astonishing virtuosity, and partly by studying the gambits of Napoleon and his opponents with the cold intelligence of a nonpartisan strategist,

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[74] *Ibid*., p.54

[75] Jessica Dubow and Richard Steadman-Jones, "Mapping Babel: Language and Exile in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*", *New German Critique,* 39.1 (2012), p.11

> surveying the entire landscape of those years from above with an eagle eye, as he once and not without pride remarked.[76]

He is also very specific about the picture of this battle scene with new patterns and he sees these events from a perspective that, "it would take an endless length of time to describe the events of such a day properly in some inconceivably complex form recording who had perished, who survived, and exactly where and how, or simply saying what the battlefield was like at nightfall, with the screams and groans of the wounded and dying."[77] What Hilary signifies for Austerlitz's future thinking and historical perspective as revealed in the rest of the book is hidden in his quote:

> All of us, even when we think we have noted every tiny detail, resort to set pieces which have already been staged often enough by others. We try to reproduce the reality, but the harder we try, the more we find the pictures that make up the stock-in-trade of the spectacle of history forcing themselves upon us: the fallen drummer boy, the infantryman shown in the act of stabbing another, the horse's eye starting from its socket, the invulnerable Emperor surrounded by his generals, a moment frozen still amidst the turmoil of battle. Our concern with history is a concern with preformed images already imprinted on our brains, images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere yet undiscovered.

In the end, the importance of Hilary to Austerlitz is his guidance in Austerlitz emergence from the shadows of the manse in Bala, along with undertaking the task of winding up his meager estate and then setting on foot the process of Austerlitz's naturalization which is a very difficult task considering that Elias had obliterated every indication of his origin. One final thing is their excursions – when Austerlitz was studying at Oriel like him – to the deserted

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[76] Sebald, 2001, pp.69-70

[77] *Ibid*., p.71

and dilapidated country houses found all around Oxford, as elsewhere, in the post-war years.

Gerald Fitzpatrick is an auxiliary character who is presented as a helper to Austerlitz in the process of overcoming the self-doubts which are sometimes oppressive. As a usual practice at public schools, Gerald was assigned to Austerlitz as a fag when he entered the sixth form and it was his job to keep Austerlitz's room tidy, clean his boots, and bring him tea. He resembles an isolated character just like Austerlitz himself and becomes a friend of him rather than being a helper though they have been disapproved by the rest of the school. As Austerlitz mentions, Gerald often accompanied him to the darkroom where he was making his first experiments with photography. They used to talk about his family and his pigeons mostly referring to their nature; how free they are and how free they want to be. Then Gerald loses his life in a plane crash. While Gerald's death is closely associated with Austerlitz's own mental collapse, in another view, Gerald and his family resembles a second family to him who feels desperately alone. Although they are not related to any architectural ideas or setting, they fit in the plot that gathers a chance to discuss collecting, identity and nature of things which is also a very Sebaldian thing. Within the romantic framework of life and death Austerlitz always relates them – mostly animals – to himself or the people like himself.

The creation of the character of Jacques Austerlitz, as explained by Sebald himself, is based on two-and-a-half real-life figures; one of them is an architectural historian in London, and the other is a German-Jewish woman who was sent with her twin sister from Munich to England on a Kindertransport. As Samuel Todd Presner quotes from Sebald, the figure of London based architectural historian manifests itself in the photograph on the

front cover of the book yet his real identity remains anonymous.[78] On the other hand, the second character is Susie Bechhöfer, a Holocaust survivor, who was born into a Jewish family in Munich and was sent with her twin sister on a Kindertransport to Wales.

Besides his association with those real figures, Austerlitz, a fictive Jew who was born in 1934 and was sent as a child in Kindertransport from his hometown Prague to England, is portrayed with wavy yellow hair, carrying always a rucksack – which he bought for ten shillings from Swedish stock in an army surplus store in the Charing Cross Road before he began his studies. As the narrator explains, Auterlitz's portrayal reveals "an outlandish idea of a certain physical likeness between him and the philosopher who died of the disease of cancer in Cambridge in 1951.[79] Moreover, the visual introduction of Wittgenstein's eyes (the lower one) paired with the artist Jan Peter Tripp (the upper one), as identified by Ross Posnock, are said to be the eyes of the "obsessive masters of looking at looking." **(fig.1.2.2)** They are presented in relation to the eyes of the Nocturnal animals about which the narrator says: "Several of them had strikingly large eyes, and the fixed, inquiring gaze found in certain painters and philosophers who seek to penetrate the darkness which surrounds us purely by means of looking and thinking." According to Posnock, in wordless alliance they together hint a shared keenness of ocular intensity,[80]

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[78] Samuel Todd Presner, "'What a Synoptic and Artificial View Reveals': Extreme History and the Modernism of W.G. Sebald's Realism", *Criticism*, 46.3 (2004), p.348. *Project MUSE*. Web. 14 Jan. 2015

[79] Sebald, 2001, p.40

[80] Ross Posnock, "'Don't Think, But Look!': W.G. Sebald, Wittgenstein, and Cosmopolitan Poverty", *Representations*, 112.1 (2010), p.118. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan 2015

the fixed, inquiring gaze found in certain painters and philosophers who seek to penetrate the darkness which surrounds us

purely by means of looking and thinking. I believe that my mind also dwelt on the question of whether the electric light was turned on for the creatures in the Nocturama when real night fell and the zoo was closed to the public, so that as day dawned over their topsy-turvy miniature universe they could fall asleep with some degree of reassurance. Over the years, images of the interior of the Nocturama have become confused in my mind with my memories of the *Salle des pas perdus,* as it is called, in Antwerp Centraal Station. If I try to conjure up a picture of that waiting room today I immediately see the Nocturama, and if I think of the Nocturama the waiting room springs to my mind, probably because when I left the zoo that afternoon I went straight into the station, or rather first stood in the square outside it for some time to look up at the façade of that fantastical building, which I had taken in only vaguely when I arrived in the morning. Now, however, I saw how far the station constructed under the patron-

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Figure 1.2.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.5

by exemplifying numerous intertextual references that Sebald uses to depict Austerlitz.

Though the reader assumes that the spoken language between Austerlitz and the narrator is always English due to the translated form of the book, it is again revealed by the narrator that:

> It was almost impossible to talk to him about anything personal, and as neither of us knew where the othercame from, we had always spoken in French since our first conversation in Antwerp, I with lamentable awkwardness, but Austerlitz with such natural perfection that for a long time I thought he had been brought up in France. When we switched to English, in which I was better versed, I was strangely touched to notice in him an insecurity which had been entirely concealed from me before, expressing itself in a slight speech impediment and occasional fits of stammering, during which he clutched the worn spectacle case he always held in his left hand so tightly that you could see the white of his knuckles beneath the skin.[81]

This reference to French can also be seen in the choice of Austerlitz's first name – Jacques – which directly but not openly refers to Jacques Offenbach, German-born French composer of Jewish origin. However, the choice of the name "Austerlitz" signifies a web of more complex concerns.

The French language is also an indicator of identity and territory. Austerlitz switches even to other languages such as Czech, German and Welsh in the time of need, to express his feelings. This switching between languages can be interpreted as insufficiency of language to express experience, and as Jessica Dubow and Richard Steadman-Jones point out, it brings the myth of linguistic

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[81] Sebald, 2001, pp.31-32

failure into the catastrophe of twentieth-century history.[82] Jessica Dubow and Richard Steadman-Jones note that the proximity of the apparent and hidden worlds, which are right characteristic to Austerlitz's way of perception, is very much associated to the Celtic oral tradition therefore his Welsh identity acts as a reminder of this understanding. Because in his "historical metaphysic", time has no real substance and there exist only interconnected dimensions of space between past and present, dead and living, and they can pass and accidentally meet one another. So in the end it is seen that Austerlitz derives his mentality from both his former culture and his teacher, Andre Hilary.

Henri Lemoine is the final character that is introduced to the narrative, as one of the library staff in Bibliotheque Nationale. Just like Austerlitz or Andre Hilary, he is also fully aware of the destructive power of architecture that excesses its purpose. He is the one who welcomes Austerlitz into the library and takes care of him. He is also the one who makes intriguing points on life as well as on the site of the building itself. The character, Lemoine, is constructed upon a report on Nationale Bibliotheque and instead of telling this historical document directly, it is embedded to a fictious character which is transferred by spoken language.

1.2.3 Significance of Architecture

Within the organization of the plot, the most prominent feature is undoubtedly the integration of specific architectural settings. **(Appendix F)** "The trauma of Austerlitz's childhood separation from his parents, not revealed to the narrator in these initial meetings," as Tom M. Lee explains, "requires that he find supplementary interests in order to avoid the disturbing past that lurks within him, and similarly it would seem, within the environments he passes

[82] Dubow and Steadman-Jones, 2012, pp.24-25

through."[83] As in the case of the characters, specific buildings, objects and landscapes are introduced to the storyline for reason. The opening of the book is with Antwerp Centraal Station, where the narrator experiences the building and then learns a mighty length of its history form Austerlitz. In the second day of their first encounter, the story continues with the inner city which specifically shows that not only singular architectural products but also urban-scale developments are put into question. In the last day of their first encounter, which took place in 1967, the dialogue between the narrator and Austerlitz concentrates this time on a different type of architectural practice: military forts. Within a general historical context of functions and design characteristics of those buildings, Sebald's apparently arbitrary geographies cover Breendonk which will be analysed in this study in detail later. It is a combination of conversation and a type of document – a newspaper article – that leads the narrator to Breendonk, where he experiences both the whole town and the building in the light of his conversation with Austerlitz. Furthermore, he benefits from the memories of Jean Amery, an Austrian essayist who suffered from torture in Breendonk, and the book of a French novelist, Claude Simon's *Le Jardin des Plantes*, to draw a framework for understanding this place.

Their second encounter happens in the industrial quarter in the south-western outskirts of the city of Liege. The narrator remembers how

> Austerlitz launched into a discourse of over two hours on the way in which, during the nineteenth century, the vision of model towns for workers entertained by philanthropic entrepreneurs had inadvertently changed into the practice of accommodating them in

[83] Tom M. Lee, "'At All Events, in Retrospect I Became Preoccupied': The Prose Fictional Metaphysics of W.G. Sebald" (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2012), p.111, Web. 13 Jan.2015

> barracks – just as our best-laid plans always turn into the exact opposite when they are put into practice.[84]

In the third encounter, which is after several months and entirely by chance, they meet at the old Gallows Hill in Brussels, on the steps of the Palace of Justice. Immediately accompanied with a visual material, the textual narrative again begins with its historical background revealing the design process and continues with the building's life afterwards.

Their fourth encounter, this time by appointment, is also full of architecture, though there is no mention of a specific building or setting. Rather Austerlitz tells his studies and his field of interest which focuses on railway architecture and architecture of the Capitalist Era.

Two decades later, in December 1996, through a curious chain of circumstances, the two meet again in the Saloon Bar of the Great Eastern Hotel in Liverpool Street. Yet again they begin to talk more or less where it had last been broken off. With the help of fictitious elements, the story revolves around the hotel itself, its background and its physical appearance. Then, the story intersects with Austerlitz's own. Having learned his real name, Austerlitz, in this place where they had never been before, reveals his past, his life in Bala. Even there is something about the choice of Bala. Though it seems that it has no architectural significance, this place becomes important allegorically. According to Dubow and Steadman-Jones, the language used here shows its allusiveness:

> Bala in the 1930s and 1940s was a predominantly Welsh-speaking community, and the Welsh language itself was then and is now the site of struggle involving painful questions of identity and

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[84] Sebald, 2001, p.28

> genealogy that speak to the dilemma of Austerlitz's biography and, indeed, to a broader condition of exile.[85]

The second part of their fifth encounter starts with a walk down to the river through Whitechapel and Shoreditch, from Wapping and Shadwell to the quiet basins, which reflect the towering office blocks of the Docklands area, then to the Foot Tunnel running under the bend in the river. Crossing the river, they climb up through Greenwich Park to the Royal Observatory. This place, described in a brief outline, is full of objects and observational instruments and has a particular role in the plot to represent the concept of time and how it is associated with space. Furthermore, it is inevitably related to the dead, in the sense of how they are beyond time, as Austerlitz expresses: "The dead are outside time, the dying and all the sick at home or in hospitals, and they are not the only ones, for a certain degree of personal misfortune is enough to cut us off from the past and the future." Because in fact:

> Time will not pass away, has not passed away, that I can turn back and go behind it, and there I shall find everything as it once was, or more precisely I shall find that all moment of time have co-existed simultaneausly, in which case none of what history tell us would be true, past events have not yet occurred but are waiting to do so at the moment when we think. of them, although that, of course, opens up the bleak prospect of everlasting misery and neverending anguish.[86]

Within this theoretical frame, Greenwich is also experienced as an urban setting and it is introduced by Austerlitz to the narrative that just like Antwerp, as it was painted by a number of artists. Then the story takes a shift towards one of the memories of Austerlitz with Hilary about a variety of demolished houses in the 1950s, a forgotten and neglected history. Describing them with

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[85] Dubow and Steadman-Jones, 2012, p.11

[86] Sebald, 2001, p.101

ornamental and functional details, finally Austerlitz makes his story through Iver Grove, which stands against the monstrous architecture of the Capitalist Era as a modest type of architecture. Detailed information about the transformation of the house in relation of the war continues several pages as the whole memory of Andromeda Lodge (Gerald's house), Hilary, Iver Groove and creates a disjunction in Austerlitz's own mental state.

The longest of their encounters, together with the stories it includes, is undubtedly the sixth one. Their meeting is organized by Austerlitz at his house on the Alderney Street, London. This time a detailed description of the house, in terms of furnishing and objects, is associated with his life style and the story concentrates on Austerlitz's search of his own past. In relation to an important conceptual photographic approach of Austerlitz – just like his approach to history – he continues to shape a general outline of his background and his life between the two encounters. He mentions how he strolled through the streets at night by making exquisite descriptions. His expeditions lead to the introduction of another major architectural product to the narrative – Liverpool Street Station. Again with a detailed account of historical background, Austerlitz while touching vaguely upon his arrival to this station through Kindertransport, equivalently evokes a forgotten relationship with Broad Street Station, which was in the place of Liverpool Street Station – all revealing the transformation in the physical and social environment. On the first day of their sixth encounter, Austerlitz's story branches off its own timeline where he mentions going to Czech Republic in the search of his parents and their house. Accordingly, another building is introduced to the narrative. It is Prague State Archive which connects this architectural expedition to another concern of the book; the use of documents.

As the story develops, the reader engages more intensively in the set of historical accounts of Nazi Regime which in the end leads the story to the

Theresienstadt, the second major fortress in the book. Historical background is assembled together with physical experience of the ghostly town. It is also supported with museum objects and archival material to be able to imagine the life which was once there. It concentrates on Austerlitz's mother, who is fictitious, in a small scale, and on the other suffered people, who are real, in a larger scale. Also re-experiencing the paths that his mother and Vera had once gone through, Austerlitz gets informed about the baths in Marienbad. At this point, it becomes visible that Austerlitz's relation to Marie is interwoven around this account. The two has a lengthy time together, talking about history of architecture, and mostly concentrating on spas, about their modesty and user friendly nature, against the monstrosity of the architecture of power. Embedded within Austerlitz's own story, Prague section leads him also to another railway station named Wilsonova Street Station. Similar characteristics are visible here, too. Historical information is gathered with a critique of the architectural period that this building fits in. Spatial features are described in a very detailed fashion and engaged with photographs of vague interiors all intersecting to reveal transformation process. In the end, while exposing its history, it also helps to recover Austerlitz's own remembrance. What is more, Austerlitz's search continues with re-animating his train travel – Kindertransport – from Pargue to London, crossing mighty landscapes. From Bohemia to Bavaria, describing an experience of crossing borders and thinking about how modernity swept over these concepts by giving time as an only agency to determine flow of life, soon Pilsen, Germany is introduced as an urban setting with its streets and buildings upon which Austerlitz briefly touches the forgetfulness of nations over wars. The story repeats itself with Theresienstadt – which is a significant characteristic of Sebald's books – where this time Austerlitz is accompanied with H.G. Adler's book to understand the context.

The seventh and the final encounter is constructed upon the setting of Paris, where Austerlitz moved to in the search of his father's last steps – right after searching for his mother's in Prague. Revolving around the police raid in Paris in 1941 as well as the concepts of past, present and space, the conversations between the narrator and Austerlitz then concentrate on Bibliotheque Nationale, the final major architectural product in the book. Again with the visually introduced material, the textual narrative deals with how one grasps the building and how it exceeds its functions, emphasizing other types of relations established with its neighbourhood. Yet again, through intertextual and archival references, Asuterlitz evokes rather forgotten history of the land on which the library was constructed and uncovers the hidden history of Jews which was vanished in the process of the transformation of the environment. After a period, Austerlitz's and the narrator's paths intersect at Gare d'Austerlitz, which seems to be the eponym of Austerlitz himself, and their story together comes to an end, leaving the narrator with a blurry mind. Yet the book, just like its beginning, ends with the narrator and his one last travel to Breendonk, this time getting support from another book *Heshel's Kingdom* by Dan Jacobson. And the story closes itself reaching no concrete finding of the fictitious characters, in the traditional novelistic sense, however bringing out many details of the built environment and many questions about them.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURE / PHOTOGRAPHY / HISTORY I: AFTERLIFE

2.1 Photography

2.1.1 Shadow of Death

"What essential feature distinguishes photography from the community of images?" asks Roland Barthes. As referred to Stefanie Harris' article, he answers this by putting the emphasis on its unique relationship to the referent. According to him, "A photograph is the absolute Particular, the sovereign Contingency (and thereby, outside of meaning)."[87] The photograph, which is the signifier, can be overlooked (invisible), whereas it can be seen straight through the referent, namely the person, and in both cases it proposes a direct link by the virtue of perceived authenticity of the chemical impression.[88] According to Stefanie Harris, this relationship to the referent creates a contrast between photography and language, in terms of authenticity. For instance, language is arbitrary in its association to its referent, so that it is considered to

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[87] Cited in Stefanie Harris, "The Return of the Dead: Memory and Photography in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*", *The German Quarterly*, 74.4 (2001), p.384. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan 2015

[88] Jeff Adams, "The Pedagogy of the Image Text: Nakazawa, Sebald and Spiegelman Recount Social Traumas", *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 29.1 (2008), p.41

be fictional. On the other hand, because of the fixed referentiality of the photograph, there is no invention but only authentification.[89]

For this reason, the photograph is considered to be "objective, fixed and truthful" in the words of Andrew Hennlich.[90] Through the realism that it claims to reveal, photography constructs itself as a documentary media, accessing the "truth," and it becomes "a perfect reflection of the goals of official histories whose claim to scientific methodologies constructs themselves as fixed, objective, and truthful."[91]

However, the photograph, being motionless, restrains itself from emerging. It is not only the anasthetization not only of figures in captioning but also of the photograph itself that "do not move" and "do not leave" in Roland Barthes' words. "They are fastened down, like butterflies."[92] Therefore, it constitutes a notion that one cannot speak of the photograph where examination is still possible. "Two things emerge from this conception of photography" says Harris,

> one, the manner in which the photograph serves to authenticate an existential singularity, or a non-repeatable event; and two, the manner in which this singularity, or absolute particularity, resists our abilities to talk about a photograph in an abstract way because each photograph bears a distinct and unique message.[93]

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[89] Harris, 2001, p.384

[90] Andrew J. Hennlich, "Narrating the German Loss: Small Histories and the Historiography of Fascist Violence" (MA thesis, University of North Carolina, 2007), p.1

[91] Hennlich, 2007, p.1

[92] Roland Barthes, "Blind Field" in "Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography" (New York, 1981), p.57

[93] Harris, 2001, p.384

By combining documentary status of a photograph and its muted characteristic, it can be suggested that the photograph is not penetrable and yet not transformable. In Barthes' ouvre, refusal is the only way to transform the photograph. This either the drawer or the wastebasket:

> Not only does it commonly have the fate of paper (perishable), but even if it is attached to more lasting supports, it is still mortal: like a living organism, it is born on the level of the sprouting silver grains, it flourishes a momenti then ages… Attacked by light, by humidity, it fades, weakens, vanishes; there is nothing left to do but throw it away.[94]

However, its mortality remains only as a physical piece of paper. On the other hand, the photograph creates sudden deaths. It reproduces the moment, faithfully and perfectly, but suspends life with a simple click of the shutter, in an act that the developed film reveals as its essence."[95] Walter Benjamin renders this procedure itself as a process which causes the models to live, "not out of the instant, but into it; during the long exposure they developed, as it were, into the image."[96]

The same procedure also finds a place in Barthes' concept of photography. As Harris points out, it is the "arrest of interpretation" which is referred to "flat death" in *Camera Lucida*. She says:

> This depiction of death can never be assimiliated, transcended or put to work." and continues, "Due to the peculiar status of photograph with relation to its referent, the 'that-has-been' attached to all photographs suggests an implicit trauma because its irretrievable 'past-ness' and the mourning of that loss. However, a

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[94] Barthes, "Flat Death", 1981, pp.92-94

[95] Eduardo Cadava, "Mortification" in *Words of Light: Thesis on the Photography of History*, (West Sussex, 1997), p.7

[96] Cadava, "Mortification", 1997, p.8

> photograph does not merely cause us to mourn the loss of a past that can never again be recuperated but simultaneously announces our own death.[97]

While acting as a kind of "death warrant," in Mark M. Anderson's conceptualization, the photograph stipulates what has died and cannot be recovered. Quoting Barthes, the notion of "le constat d'une mort" creates a catastrophe.[98] However Silke Arnold-de Simine indicates that photographs, while creating a sense of immediacy, actually reduce the space between the living and the dead.[99] By this way, they allow to communicating with dead, and for George Kouvaros, this is the exact intention of Sebald while writing the dilemma of memory, which is very different from the process of conscious remembrance. Sebald uses many photographs, scattered across his writings, just to encounter memory through life of images and things.[100]

This concept is also discussed in the works of Andre Bazin and Susan Sontag who compare the photograph to a death mask. Regarding this association, Harris, however, emphasizes Barthes' concept of death and refers to him as the one who "opens up the problems both how to present history and the peculiar relationship to death announced by the photograph." It is "the return of the dead" which is present in every photograph in Barthes' words.[101]

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[97] Harris, "The Return of the Dead: Memory and Photography in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*", *The German Quarterly*, 74.4 (2001), p.384. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 Jan 2015

[98] Anderson, 2003, p.111

[99] Silke Arnold-de Simine, "Memory Museum and Museum Text: Intermediality in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz", Theory, Culture and Society*, 29.1 (2012), p.17

[100] George Kouvaros, "Images that Remember Us: Photography and Memory in Austerlitz", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.390

[101] Harris, 2001, p.383

It can be suggested that the notion of "the return of the dead" defines the power of photography, which has the capability of surviving the death, as pointed out by Eduardo Cadava: "In photographing someone, we know that the photograph will survive him – it begins, even during his life, to circulate without him, figuring and anticipating his death each time it is looked at."[102] In this way, the dead becomes a ghost, its once being presents forms of the referential structure of our relationship to the photograph, as Cadava continues.[103] It can be suggested that this is the reason why Austerlitz avoids turning the viewfinder of his camera on people. As he explains:

> In my photographic work I was always especially entranced ... by the moment when the shadows of reality, so to speak, emerge out of nothing on the exposed paper, as memories do in the middle of the night, darkening again if you try to cling to them, just like a photographic print left in the developing bath too long.[104]

Those "shadows of reality", in Austerlitz's terms, flash the truth of photography. Photography's being analogous to perception is the reason why Austerlitz calls them as 'shadows'. Perception works like a camera to seize reality, however, since it works like a camera, it fails to seize reality. So as Cadava quotes from Henri Bergson, these pictures might bear the traces of their relation to the past but they do not give us the past. They only reveal the existence of reality, because unlike memory, a photograph does not know how to filter or cut through the layer of everyday details in order to arrive at what is

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[102] Cadava, "Ghosts", 1997, p.11

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] Sebald, 2001, p.77

significant or essential.[105] However, this virtual-being is always neutralized at the very moment when it becomes actuality.[106]

This neutralization caused by the photographs is due to the capacity of photography to reduce people to the status of things, as remarked by Kouvaros: "Grandmother was once a person, and to this person belonged the chignon and the corset as well as the high-Renaissance chair." However, the representation of the past wanders ghost-like through the present, "like the lady of the haunted castle" in Kouvaros' words, because this detritus was not only once alive[107] but also survived its own death through the immortalization of time in the photograph.[108] This is the representation of a very subtle moment where the photographed one was neither subject nor object, but a subject who feels he/she was becoming an object. Barthes names this process as the experience of a micro-version of death: "I am truly becoming a specter."[109]

This "ghostly" quality, suggested by Barthes, finds itself a place as "spectral" in Sebald's ouvre.[110] Regarding this term, Leland de la Durantaye, on the basis of an interview with Sebald and an essay by Sebald on Kafka, explains that: "What is so moving in photographic images is a peculiar beyond that seems to move in and out of them."[111] For the depiction of spectrality, Tom M. Lee uses

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[105] Kouvaros, 2009, p.406

[106] Cadava, "Reflections", 1997, p.92

[107] Kouvaros, 2009, pp.406-407

[108] Harris, 2001, p.383

[109] Barthes, "He Who is Photographed", 1981, p.14

[110] De la Durantaye, 2008, p.442

[111] *Ibid.*

a full-page image reproduced in *Austerlitz.* Accordingly, he aims to highlight the obscure correspondence between the living and the dead. The photograph shows intertwined skeletons, which are, as said in the text, unearthed during the rebuilding of Broad Street station in 1984. **(fig.2.1.1)**

Apart from the death – in the form of skeletons – being represented in the photographic medium, Lee claims that "the animated quality of the skeletons in the image is paradoxically emphasized by their stillness, as if it were a precondition of their being able to cackle or "babble" for eternity." He further develops his idea by saying that it is due to the dead and the living sharing the same reality, causing skeletons appear lively. In this way, photographs of the living represent them as if they were ghosts.[112]

This spectral quality is taken on another level by George Kauvaros. According to him, it is not only the ghostly photographs that appear in *Austerlitz,* but also the protagonist's own "ghostly" quality that caused by the loss of subjective primacy. This loss, which is due to gazing into the shadows of history, turns Austerlitz inevitably into a shadow. This is an issue of thinking history through photography, as Kauvaros states:

> What Sebald has given us in Austerlitz is history written from the point of view of a ghost, of something projected back from an image. But not just any image: only a photographic image is able to look back at us in a way that both certifies the existence of the past and simultaneously foretells the catastrophe of the future-to-come.[113]

Here, in reference to Kafka's term of "sinister," it is possible to suggest that photography codes the "sinister" practice of creating death-in-life, or the

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[112] Lee, 2012, pp.123-124

[113] Kouvaros, 2009, p.412

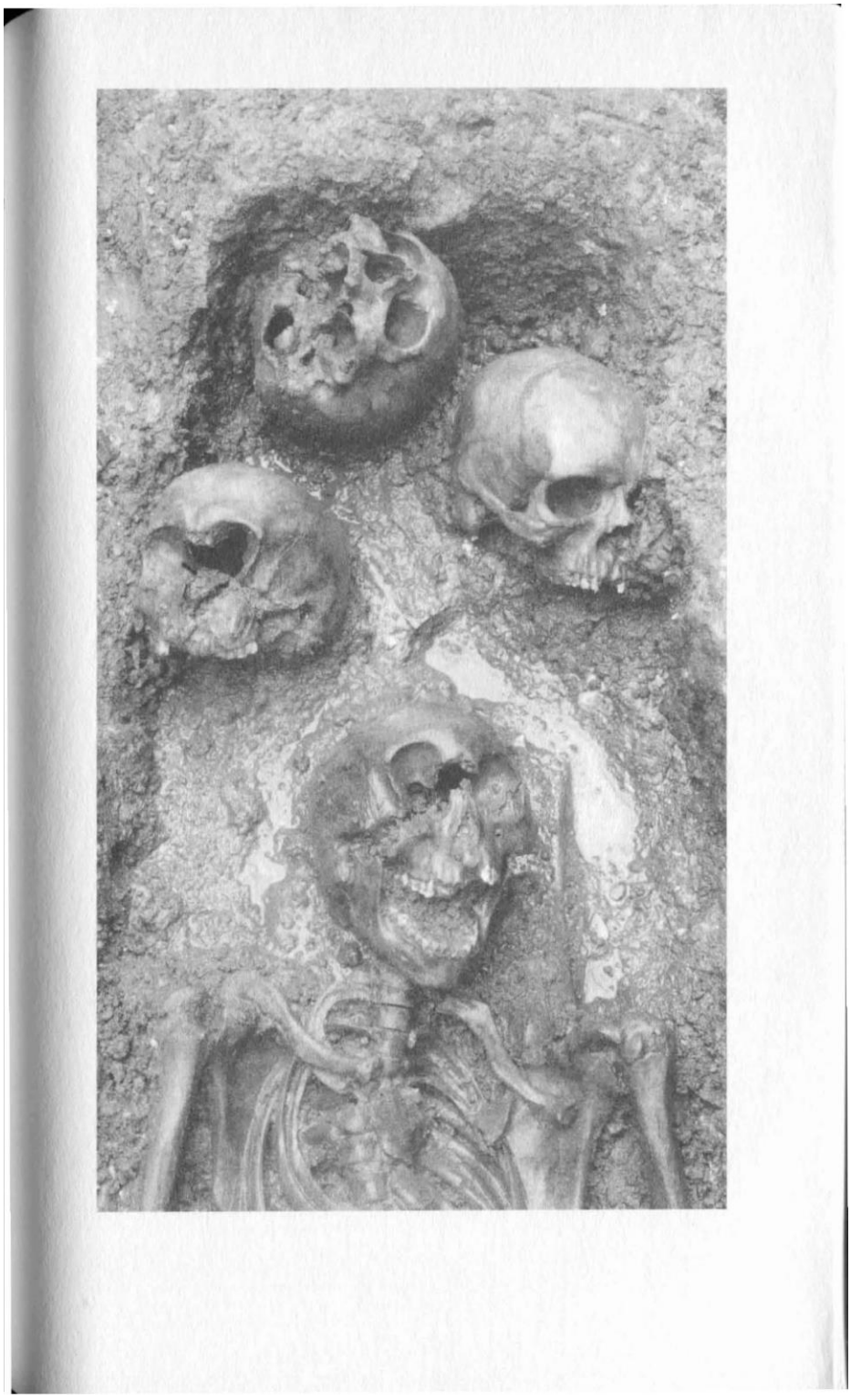

Figure 2.1.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.131

shadow of death. It causes the destruction of the original memory, even as it creates an "aura of another world."[114] Thus, the photograph confronts us and touches us with the specificity of loss. On the verge of collapse, "with this photograph which yellows, fades, and will someday be thrown out," says Roland Barthes, not only life but also love disappears forever.

> In front of the only photograph in which I find my father and mother together, this couple who I know loved each other, I realize: it is love-as-treasure which is going to disappear forever; for once I am gone, no one will any longer be able to testify to this: nothing will remain but an indifferent Nature.[115]

So, according to Harris, photographs of the past, the photographs of the unknown not only present us an image of decay, but also prompt us to ask: "Where are all of the souls who once inhabited these structures?"[116] This is the relationship between the signifier and the referent – namely, the image and the reader – that Sebald aims to generate which in the end enables its reception as a means of learning and knowing of past traumas."[117]

2.1.2 Use of Photographic Image

"Photograph is a nomadic thing", says Sebald, "it meant to get lost, somewhere in a box, in an attic."[118] It has a small chance only to survive while announcing its mortification. To explain this point, Stefanie Harris borrows Kracauer's

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[114] Deane Blackler, "Sebald's Strange Cinematic Prose: Statis and Kinesis", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.383

[115] Barthes, "Flat Death", 1981, pp.92-94

[116] Harris, 2001, p.385

[117] Adams, 2008, p.4

[118] Taller de Escriture Fuentetaja, "Sebald y la fotografía" Online video clip. *YouTube*, 3 Apr. 2014. Web. 9 Feb. 2015

description of "unerlöst[e]", which means that photographs are ghostly in terms of their presentation of a past that was once present. Here, it seems possible to detach photographs from the clutches of death, according to Harris, just because of the manner in which time is immortalized in them.[119] In this sense, they wait for their rescue: "We were here, too once and please take care of us for a while."[120] Indeed what they evoke is also a response to a past that can no longer be retrieved.[121] They return to us as shadows of reality by reminding us of their existence at the time they were taken. But since Sebald does not consider photography akin to the historicist project of reenacting the reality of the past,[122] he does not hesitate to pushing the boundaries of these silent agents. Although Christine Berberich claims that Sebald's usage of images aims to connect the creation of memory with the visual material,[123] they cannot be seen as solely precious pieces of past memories. Though photography, unlike memory, does not know how to filter the layer of everyday details,[124] just like language, Berberich indicates, they can be manipulated, and distorted which is very much evident in *Austerlitz*. For this reason, photographs have to be considered carefully and critically.

Many authors agree on this fundamental difficulty that Sebald's photographs pose. Mary Griffin Wilson, who is one of them, points out, in reference to

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[119] Harris, 2001, p.383

[120] Taller de Escriture Fuentetaja, 2014

[121] Harris, 2001, p.383

[122] Presner, 2004, p.348

[123] Christine Berberich, "England? Whose England? (Re)constructing English Identities in Julian Barnes and W.G. Sebald", *National Identities*, 10.2 (2008), p.177

[124] Kouvaros, 2009, p.406

Roland Barthes, that "the *studium* that the text suggests may not indicate the *true* referential geneology of the image."[125] Then it is important to uncover this studium that the text suggests. According to James P. Martin's brief summary of Barthes' concept, "Studium refers to a *classical body of information*, which is perceived by the viewer *quite familiarly* as a consequence of knowledge and culture."[126] For Barthes, studium requires to understand the photographer's intentions, apart from *Spectator*'s personal approval or disapproval. Thousands of photographs – rebellion, Nicaragua, wretched un-uniformed soldiers, ruined streets, corpses, grief, the sun, the heavy-lidded Indian eyes – constitute this field.[127] Because studium is culturally determined, educative and available to all spectators indiscriminately, it is not always possible to figure out those intentions.

In *Austerlitz*, interruption of studium occurs at different levels. For example, in the expedition of London as a pilgrim, walking through the footsteps of Jacques Austerlitz and the narrator, J.J. Long finds out that the throne room mentioned for pages as part of the Great Eastern Hotel, actually does not exist.[128] In the narration, that specific throne room **(fig.2.1.2)** finds itself as a place Austerlitz is eager to show to the narrator. This is a place that the protagonist never entered in his life before and somehow, it is associated with the timeline when he learns his buried history. This section continues in the quote below:

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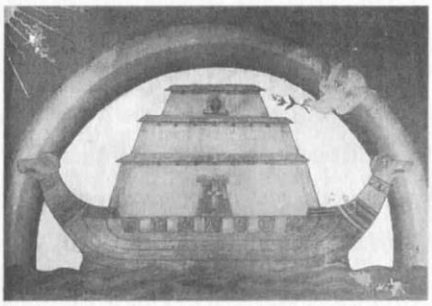
[125] Mary Griffin Wilson, "Sheets of Past: Reading the Image in W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*" *Contemporary Literature,* 54.1 (2013), p.54 *Project MUSE*. Web. 15 Apr. 2014

[126] James P. Martin, "Photography in the Works of Gerhard Roth and W.G. Sebald", *Modern Austrian Literature*, 40.4 (2007), p.48

[127] Barthes, "STUDIUM and PUNCTUM", "Studium", 1981, pp.26-27

[128] SOURCE Photographic Review, "Austerlitz" Online video clip. *YouTube*. 16 Aug. 2013. Web. 14 May 2014

and the billiards saloons, through suites and up staircases to the fourth floor where the kitchens used to be, and then down to the basement and the floor below the basement, once upon a time a cool labyrinth for the storage of Rhine wines, claret, and champagne, for the making of thousands of items of pâtisserie and the preparation of vegetables, red meat, and pale poultry. As for the fish section, where perch, pike, plaice, sole, and eels lay heaped on black slate slabs with fresh water constantly running over them, Pereira described it as a whole underworld in itself, said Austerlitz, and if it hadn't been too late he, Austerlitz, would go round the place again with me. He added that he would particularly like to show me the temple, with its ornamental gold-painted picture of a three-story ark floating beneath a rainbow, and the dove just returning to it carrying the olive branch in her beak. Oddly



enough, said Austerlitz, as he stood in front of this attractive motif with Pereira that afternoon he had been thinking of our encounters in Belgium, so long ago now, and telling himself he must find someone to whom he could relate his own story, a story which he had learned only in the last few years and for which he needed the kind of listener I had once been in Antwerp, Liège,

Figure 2.1.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.43

> He added that he would particulary like to show me the temple, with its ornamental gold-painted picture of a three-story ark floating beneath a rainbow, the dove just returning to it carrying the olive branch in her beak. Oddly enough, said Austerlitz, as he stood in front of this attractive motif with Pereira that afternoon had been thinking of our encounters in Belgium, so long ago now, and telling himself he must find someone to whom he could relate his own story, a story which he had learned only in the last few years and for which he needed the kind of listener I had once been in Antwerp, Liege, and Zeebrugge.[129]

Also the office **(fig.2.1.3)** which is said to be Austerlitz's, creates a false reality. His work place, which is in Bloomsbury, not far from the British Museum, is described by the narrator as a crowded study. "It is like a stockroom of books and papers with hardly any space left for himself, let alone his students, among the stacks piled high on the floor and the overloaded shelves."[130] However, in the video of J.J. Long's investigation, Michael Brandon-James, who is a former colleague of Sebald, reveals by pointing out the picture that "This is one of my photographs and it is actually an office where I worked. I produced the photograph for Max."[131]

Another example is brought to light by Wilson in her discussion of photographs in *Austerlitz*. Apart from mismatched places, the second type of interruption occurs as an inability of verification which causes further suspect. For this case, her perspective is quite similar to Long in the search of studium. She asserts that the images of the Palace of Justice, the dome at Antwerp Station, and the eyes of those 'certain painters and philosophers' Ludwig Wittgenstein and Peter Van Tripp could be verified by cross-referencing.

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[129] Sebald, 2001, pp.43-44

[130] *Ibid*., p.32

[131] SOURCE Photographic Review, 2013

English, in which I was better versed, I was strangely touched to notice in him an insecurity which had been entirely concealed from me before, expressing itself in a slight speech impediment and occasional fits of stammering, during which he clutched the worn spectacle case he always held in his left hand so tightly that you could see the white of his knuckles beneath the skin.

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Almost every time I went to London in the years that followed I visited Austerlitz where he worked in Bloomsbury, not far from the British Museum. I would usually spend an hour or so sitting with him in his crowded study, which was like a stockroom of books and papers with hardly any space left for himself, let alone

his students, among the stacks piled high on the floor and the overloaded shelves. When I began my own studies in Germany I had learnt almost nothing from the scholars then lecturing in the humanities there, most of them academics who had built their ca-

Figure 2.1.3: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.32

However, “there is no way of proving that the young girl with the dog was in fact an inhabitant of the real town of Llanwddyn, although we may suppose that such a town existed.”[132] **(fig.2.1.4)**

These examples indicate actually a very limited characteristic of studium, as Lynn Wolff notes. The photographs are taken out of the context of the reportage or a historical discourse. This very much overlaps what Kraceur propones through the figure of grandmother, mentioned earlier. As Bertolt Brecht also remarks, a photograph of a building – namely the Krupp or the AEG factory – is able to say almost nothing about it because “a simple reproduction of reality says less than anything ever before about reality.”[133]

These depictions clearly show that the photograph can easily switch to a deceptive status due its characteristic of being a silent agent, even though it verifies its authentication. In this respect, Wolff, by referring to Kracauer and Brecht, makes an explicit relation between this muted feature of photography and its context. While Kracauer’s figure of grandmother cannot be reconstructed out of the photograph without the oral tradition, Brecht’s photographed figure is not ‘reality’ itself but just a representation. According to Brecht, the social context is the only way to explain reality because representing reality – namely photography – is not the same as making a statement about this reality.[134] On the other hand, there are different opinions in the debate of Sebald’s relationship with photography. For example, apart from studium, Jeff Adams considers reproduced photographs reminiscent of Barthes’

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[132] Wilson, 2013, pp.54-55

[133] Wolff, 2009, p.327

[134] *Ibid*., pp.328-329

theory of the "punctum."[135] Punctum, refers to unexpected, often accidental details that disturb the studium and prick the viewer's emotions.[136] As noted by Clive Scott, punctum is an irresistible activator of something deeply buried in the spectator's psyche. Punctum acts regardless of time, so that a photograph of 1910 may "prick" a spectator in 2010, in Barthesian sense.[137]

In *Austerlitz*, in the spectator's relation with photography, different types of punctums are proposed. For example, the condition of 'that-has-been' is pointed out by Clive Scott, former collegue of Sebald, as an illusory resurrection at the expense of a death foretold.[138] Photography, in this junction is considered to be a 'memento mori', which is also known as vanitas – suggested by Susan Sontag as quoted by James P. Martin. According to Sontag, "photography is an elgiac art, a twilight art" and what a memento mori fulfils is "to remind the viewer of the omnipresence of death" in the form of an object or image.[139]

Moreover, regarding Barthes' punctum, Martin also discusses the idea of photograph, which bears the traces of its own dialectical contingency by enabling the critical observer to regard the spectrum of time encapsulated in it. He develops this point through the Benjaminian dialect which considers fascination of photography in relation to its beholder's present, rather than the

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[135] Adams, 2008, p.41

[136] Martin, 2007, p.48

[137] Clive Scott, "Still Life, Portrait, Photograph, Narrative in the Work of W.G. Sebald" in Jeannette Baxter, Valerie Henitiuk and Ben Hutchinson, eds., *A Literature of Restitution* (Manchester/New York, 2013), p.229

[138] Scott, 2013, p.229

[139] Cited in Martin, 2007, p.51

been submerged in that dark water, and like the poor souls of Vyrnwy must keep my eyes wide open to catch a faint glimmer of light far above me, and see the reflection, broken by ripples, of the stone tower standing in such fearsome isolation on the wooded bank. Sometimes I even imagined that I had seen one or other of the people from the photographs in the album walking down the road in Bala, or out in the fields, particularly around noon on hot summer days, when there was no one else about and the air flickered hazily. Elias said I was not to speak of such things, so instead I spent every free moment I could with Evan the cobbler, whose workshop was not far from the manse and who had a reputation for seeing ghosts. I also learned Welsh from Evan, picking it up very quickly, because I liked his stories much better than the endless psalms and biblical verses I had to learn by heart for Sunday school. Unlike Elias, who always connected illness and

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Figure 2.1.4: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.53

'reality' of the image itself. Between the represented and the beholder, time becomes a *punctum* in Barthes' discourse, and in this way, the past becomes available in the present. Different from punctum as detail, time operates on image and image gives the message "this will be and this has been," but also "that is dead and that is going to die" in Martin's words.[140]

Mary Griffin Wilson, suggesting another perspective, contradicts Barthesian punctum, specifically regarding *Austerlitz*, that photographic images, experienced by Jacques Austerlitz, act as 'that-is' rather than 'that-has-been,' since the presence created by the image is in fact a present.[141]

In an attempt to reveal this complex relationship between photography, memory and time, Wilson points out the relevancy of Deleuze's concept of by quoting him:

> We have great difficulty in understanding a survival of the past in itself because we believe that the past is no longer, that it has ceased to be. We have thus confused being with being-present. Nevertheless, the present is not; rather, it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It is not, but it acts… The past, on the other hand, has ceased to actor to be useful. But it has not ceased to be.[142]

For the act of recollection, what seems especially important is Deleuzian 'jump' onto the circle – or the 'sheet' – of the past.[143] "If not found on this sheet, one

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[140] *Ibid*.

[141] Wilson, 2013, p.59

[142] Cited in *Ibid.*

[143] "Deleuze reemphasizes the spatial properties of the cone and applies the revised image to a broader theory of temporality. For Deleuze, the past is composed of "the coexistence of circles which are more or less dilated or contracted, each one of which contains everything at the same time and the present of which is the extreme limit (the smallest circuit that contains all the past)" (99). He describes these circles as "sheets

must return to the present and make another jump", says Wilson, "until the correct 'sheet of past' has been located."[144]

Right at this point, Wilson argues that images function to indicate the sheet of past, and the action of 'leap' itself. This action requires the reader to take an active role in the recollection process in order to traverse the gap between text and image. Refering to Bergson, she emphasizes that "image is not the starting point for recollection; rather it is in the image that the recollection is realized."[145]

In this respect, Austerlitz's experience at the museum of veterinary science, which excessively overwhelms him, causes blurring of his memories. For the recollection of those memories, he explains to the narrator:

> I was unable to recall any of what I have just told you, for it was in the Métro on my way back from Maisons-Alfort that I had the first of the several fainting fits I was to suffer, causing temporary but complete loss of memory, a condition described in psychiatric textbook as far as I am aware, Austerlitz added, as hysterical epilepsy. Only when I developed the photographs I had taken that Sunday in September at Maisons-Alfort was I able, with their aid

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of past" above which looms the "peak of present," where the peak is roughly analogous to the tip of the cone in Bergson's diagram." "In Cinema 2, Deleuze expands upon Bergson's diagram of the inverted cone, which illustrates the continuous movement from what Bergson terms "pure memory" (which remains virtual until referred to perception) and the sensory-motor present (MatterandMemory170).In this diagram, the inverted cone represents the totality of individual recollections (197).The base of the cone, which is situated at the furthest point in the past, remains motionless, while the summit moves continuously forward. This summit also continuously touches a plane (P), "the moving plane P of my actual representation of the universe" (196). Within the space of the cone, "pure memory" is forever becoming actualized in the present moment, the point at which it is referred to perception." *Ibid*. p.61

[144] *Ibid.*

[145] *Ibid.,* p.62

> and guided by Marie's patient questioning, to reconstruct my buried experiences.[146]

Just like in the other works of Sebald, in *Austerlitz* too, the reproduced photographs shows aging buildings, desolate landscapes, portraits of forgotten people and mysterious objects. Regarding the very basic question of how these baffling photographs are collected, Sebald explains in an interview, released on YouTube, by *Taller de Escriture Fuentetaja,* Sebald answers that question by saying some of them are taken by him – with his cheap camera – some others are gathered from different family albums, archives and published works, or from simply anything that comes his way through years.[147]

The photographs in *Austerlitz* are all in black and white, and mostly, they show deserted spaces. As revealed directly or indirectly in the text, like Sebald, Jacques Austerlitz, the protagonist, has a cheap camera and has taken some of the reproduced photographs.[148] Furthermore, reminding one of Sebald's interest in particular photographic images, Austerlitz himself talks about his own:

> From the outset my main concern was with the shape and the self-contained nature of discrete things, the curve of banisters on a staircase, the molding of a stone arch over a gateway, the tangled precision of the blades in a tussock of dried grass. I took hundred of such photographs at Stower Grange, most of them in square

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[146] Sebald, 2001, p.268

[147] Taller de Escriture Fuentetaja, 2014

[148] *"*Austerlitz took a few photographs, some of them of the snow-white stucco roses in the frieze of flowers running around the ceiling, others of the panorama of the city to the north and northwest on the far side of the park, shot through the leaded windowpanes, and while he was still busy with his camera he embarked on a disquisition of some length on time, much of which has remained clear in my memory.*"* in Sebald, 2001, pp.99-100

> format, but it never seemed to me right to turn the viewfinder of my camera on people.[149] **(fig.2.1.5)**

So the photographs of this kind, which definitely do not have any concern to enhance aesthetic pleasure or create ornamental associations to text, act as a gate to take the spectators into an unknown realm. They are called as 'genuine images' by Amir Eshel, in reference to Walter Benjamin. They form 'dialectics at a standstill' that "come together in the flash with the now to form a constellation," in Benjamin's words, so that they relate the reader to what is and what will remain absent – the events and the protagonists of the past.[150] At this point, it is important to note that it is not only the events that create absence, but also the absence in the photographs themselves that co-works in developing constellations of images. Martin's point regarding the emptiness of a photograph finds itself a place here in terms of stimulating the image's associative potential and triggering the viewer's active role in understanding the image.[151] In this respect, it is not always easy to grasp how the concept of "omnipresence of death" creates the dialectic that Sebald aims to adopt in his visual narratives. For example, this vision is made visible, yet embodying obscurities on purpose, in one of the final expeditions of Austerlitz in Bibliothèque Nationale. As Austerlitz says:

> Only a few days after reading this book, the more melodramatic aspects of which, Austerlitz continued, reinforced the suspicion I had always entertained that the border between life and death is less impermeable than we commonly think, I was in the reading room again and, on opening an American architectural journal-this was at exactly six in the evening – I came upon a large-format

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[149] *Ibid*., p.76

[150] Eshel, 2003, p.94

[151] Martin, 2007, p.49

> photograph showing the room filled with open shelves up to the ceiling where the files on the prisoners in the little fortress of Terezin, as it is called, are kept today.[152] **(fig.2.1.6)**

First of all, in the reproduced photograph covering two pages – instead of just one – Martin's interpretation of Sebald's selection of disturbing details shows up as the clock on the wall, and the pulled back chair. These details – *punctum* – are not irritating in the literal sense, but rather salient in terms of creating an insight.[153] On this notion of time expressed by the clock which shows exactly six o'clock, Martin Modlinger comments: "This correlation in time builds a connection in space: instead of working in the crowded reading room of the Bibliotheque Nationale, he should be – right now, at this very moment – at his place in the empty reading room in Theresienstadt." Besides, the slightly pulled back chair in the left corner of the room, in Modlinger's view, "invites the viewer to sit down and start working on the histories, personal and collective, that fill the room."[154]

On the other hand, as a death warrant, the image is defined through a dialectic relation between presence and absence. As Modlinger points out, this is the presence, profusion even, of prisoner files and the absence of a reader, "of a human being interested in these documents of suffering."[155]

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[152] Sebald, 2001, p.283

[153] Martin, 2007, p.50

[154] Martin Modlinger, "'Mein Wahrer Arbeitplatz': The Role of Theresienstadt in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*", *German Life and Letters*, 65.3 (2012), p.353

[155]Modlinger, 2012, p.353

make a huge blaze, and would not mind if the whole school were reduced to a pile of rubble and ashes. After that I kept an eye on Gerald. I let him off tidying my room and cleaning my boots, and I made the tea myself and shared it with him, a breach of regulations regarded with disapproval by most of my fellow pupils and my housemaster himself, rather as if it were against the natural order of things. In the evenings Gerald often accompanied me to the darkroom where, at this time, I was making my first experiments with photography. This little cubbyhole behind the chemistry lab had not been used for years, but the wall cupboards and drawers still held several boxes with rolls of film, a large supply of photographic paper, and a miscellaneous collection of cameras, including an Ensign such as I myself owned later. From the outset my main concern was with the shape and the self-

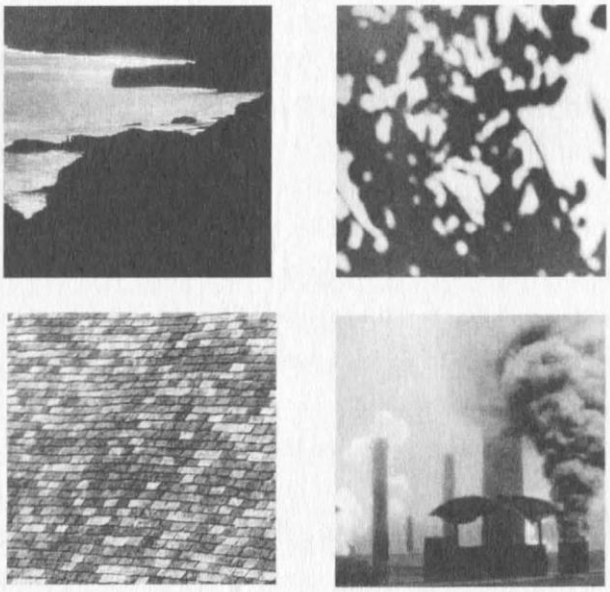

Figure 2.1.5: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.76

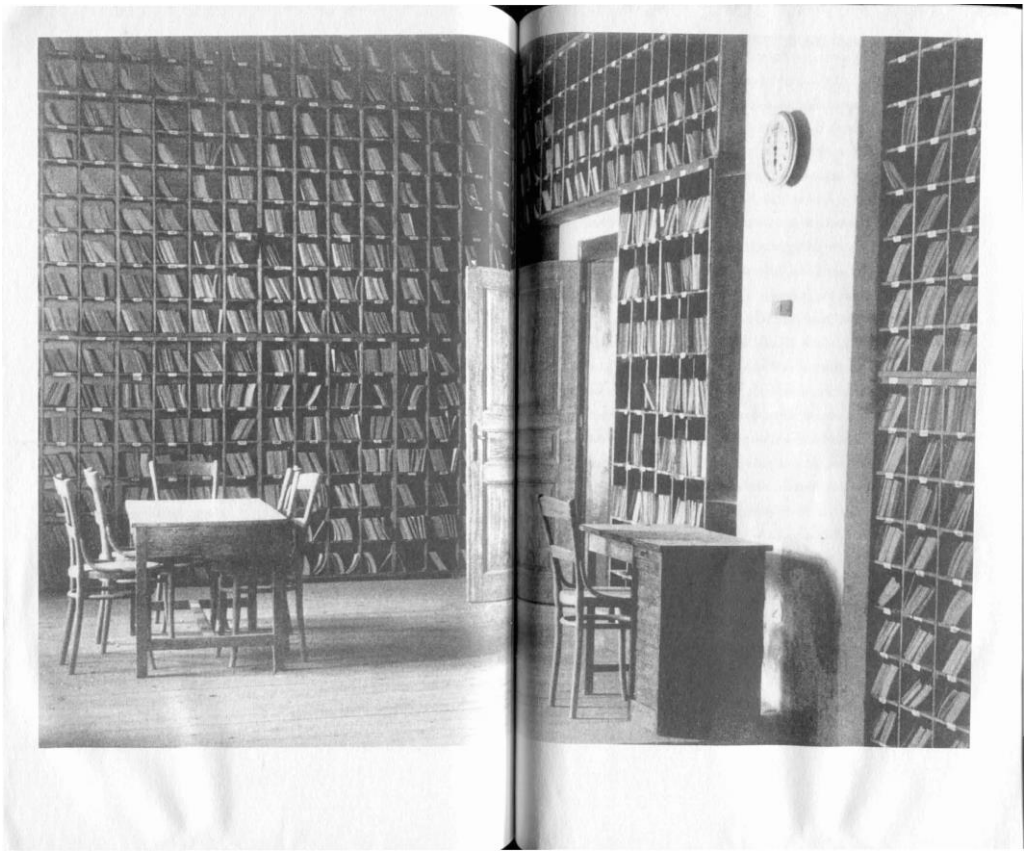

Figure 2.1.6: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.284-285

2.1.3 History Happening With Photography

"Photograph, like the souvenir, is the corpse of an experience, which is the suspension of reality and its referents."[156] While speaking as death, as the trace of what passes into history, Cadava explains by referring to Benjamin that photograph can be neither death nor itself. In this way, its place is in between life and death. Yet it is where history happens when something becomes present while passing away, so there is nothing but photography to deliver the

[156] Cadava, "Death", 1997, p.128

truth of history.[157] As Cadava claims, photography does not belong to history; it offers history. It can be suggested that this is why Austerlitz is very much obsessed with photographs in the novel. As mentioned earlier, he takes many photographs – amateurish in quality – as well as studies them over and over again. In the process he always questions the status of history and permeability of it.

> 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 are unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision.[158]

This passage quoted by the narrator indicates what George Kauvaros develops in his discussion of photography and history. According to him, Sebald wants us to read the gaze that looks back at Austerlitz on two levels. First "as a manifestation of Austerlitz's estranged relationship to his past" and more broadly, "as a metaphor for photography's capacity to figure a past that returns without us."[159] It is an understanding of past that does not affirm the centrality of the perceiving subject but instead highlights the contingency and finitude of human existence.

In Sebald's historical visual pedagogy, it can be said that the photographs emerge as documents of a past that cannot be recovered. Accordingly, Martin claims that apart from deciphering the forgotten, Sebald's ultimate concern is

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[157] *Ibid.*

[158] Sebald, 2001, p.185

[159] Kouvaros, 2009, p.410

the attempt of reconstructing the past which can reveal the present. This becomes possible through experiential nature of learning with photographs. Jeff Adams gives Vera's thinking as an example – "One had the impression, she said, of something stirring in them, as if one caught small sighs of despair ... as if the pictures had a memory of their own and remembered us, remembered the roles that we, the survivors, and those no longer among us had played in our former lives." – and continues with the idea that image experiences act as a reflexive process which produces the act of 'becoming to know' by learning the past.[160]

Sebald uses different visualization techniques to create the ambivalence of text and image. One of them is creating a dialectical image and working with it. This notion of being remembered by the images shows itself in the Pilsen Station, though there is no reproduced photograph depicting it. This station is where after many years Austerlitz finds the strength to animate his past in the route of Kindertransport. Adams emphasizes that particular section where Austerlitz tells to the narrator:

> the idea, ridiculous in itself, that this cast iron column, which with its scaly surface seemed almost to approach the nature of a living being, might remember me and was, if I may so put it, said Austerlitz, a witness to what I could no longer recollect for myself.[161]

The description of the cast iron column at Pilsen takes on the status of something that strikes us from outside, from the world of objects, things and images says George Kouvaros.[162] On the other hand, Adams finalizes this

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[160] Adams, 2008, p.41

[161] *Ibid.*

[162] Kouvaros, 2009, p.410

process of creating a dialectical image which is triggered in the reader's mind by simply the absence of the image, so that a certain kind of void is generated by the previous sequence of image encounters. **(fig.2.1.7)** This confrontation blurs the distinction between fact and fiction where, as Adams notes, "the textual meaning is not fixed by the image." Yet there is at least no false implication created by the textual narration neither. This drives the critical reader to take an active role in the process of interpretation.[163]

As Martin suggests, it is precisely this process of interpretation and its potential for transcendent meaning that Sebald continually highlights by embellishing the text with the historical photographs he gathers.[164] By using photograph as a signifier, Sebald manages to articulate material realm by word and image. Kauvaros reads this association as a part of writing of the past. According to him, cross-over between language and photographic images pose a challenge to ideas of history and memory.[165] Although written word is still dominant over visual narratives, Dana Arnold suggests that printed image as well as oral histories can challenge the hegemony of word by simply introducing "the notion of an eye-witness account which has an aura of authenticity" while converting and emulating the narrative contents "to give a sense of immediacy and legibility."[166]

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[163] Adams, 2008, p.41

[164] Martin, 2007, p.53

[165] Kouvaros, 2009, p.402

[166] Dana Arnold, "Facts or Fragments: Visual Histories in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", *Art History*, 25.4 (2002), pp.450-451

the underworld, as it has often been described. The ballast between the tracks, the cracked sleepers, the brick walls with their stone bases, the cornices and panes of the tall windows, the wooden kiosks for the ticket inspectors, and the towering cast-iron columns with their palmate capitals were all covered in a greasy black layer formed, over the course of a century, by coke dust and soot, steam, sulfur, and diesel oil. Even on sunny days only a faint grayness, scarcely illuminated at all by the globes of the station lights, came through the glass roof over the main hall, and in this eternal dusk, which was full of a muffled babble of

voices, a quiet scraping and trampling of feet, innumerable people passed in great tides, disembarking from the trains or boarding them, coming together, moving apart, and being held up at barriers and bottlenecks like water against a weir. Whenever I got out at Liverpool Street Station on my way back to the East End, said Austerlitz, I would stay there at least a couple of hours, sitting on a bench with other passengers who were already tired in the early morning, or standing somewhere, leaning on a handrail

Figure 2.1.7: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.128

More clearly, images melted in the spoken language boundaries, as she adds, enable the transference of ideas between different disciplines.[167] In this context, many of the photographs in Sebald's novel while linking the ideas to Holocaust, achieve a symbolic and even iconic status by inhibiting narration exactly where it is needed.[168] As Holocaust is a traumatic event – which creates a problem in terms of representability due to the incapability of witnesses registering the truth fully, considering the overwhelming intensity of the experience – reformulation of this issue through media offers complex network of references, allusions and ambiguities to produce a degree of experiential realism.[169] Yet according to Lynn Wolff, this engagement, again, comprises the necessity of interpretation by human voice, in the end translating history and personal experience into arbitrary signs. Being by no means a natural or fluid one, this representation is what *Austerlitz* as a prose work manages to achieve as a new technique in the discourse of historiography.[170] For example, the photograph in which the appearing figure is said to be Austerlitz himself – revealed in one of the conversations with Vera – is reproduced both on the cover and in the book **(fig.2.1.8)**. This photograph depicting Austerlitz at the age of four, is taken only months before he is sent to Wales on a Kindertransport. The physical appearance is described by Andrew J. Hennlich as "dressed in a dramatic snow-white gown and knee length trousers The young boy clutching a hat with a matching fur edged cape peers out into the distance of a flat landscape towards his mother just before she is to take him to a costume ball."[171]

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[167]Arnold, 2002, p.450

[168] Wolff, 2009, p.326

[169] Adams, 2008, p.47

[170] Wolff, 2009, pp.328-329

[171] Hennlich, 2007, p.4

former lives. Yes, and the small boy in the other photograph, said Vera after a while, this is you, Jacquot, in February 1939, about six months before you left Prague. You were to accompany Agáta to a masked ball at the house of one of her influential admirers, and she had the snow-white costume made for you especially for the occasion. On the back it says *Jacquot Austerlitz, paže růžové královny,* in your grandfather's handwriting, for he happened to be visiting at the time. The picture lay before me, said Austerlitz, but I dared not touch it. The words *páže růžové královny, paže růžové královny* went round and round in my head, until their meaning came to me from far away, and once again I saw the live tableau

Figure 2.1.8: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.183

For Hennlich, this photograph can also be interpreted as a representation of absences experienced in the Holocaust without giving a direct and violent image. This absence belongs to the mother figure, who takes the picture as *the Operator*, so it is not only the outfit of Austerlitz, but more importantly, what he sees – namely eyes of his mother – that becomes a tactic for Sebald, in a very Barthesian manner, by creating an experience. In Hennlich's words,

> instead of representing the death of a victim, …the eyes, like a camera provide a sense of having been there for the viewer/reader. The photograph of Austerlitz as a child becomes a vessel for his personal memories of displaced childhood, witnessing himself as a forgotten part of his own history, but also is the seed to a much larger memory in its representation of the Holocaust.[172]

Then it raises a number of questions in one's mind about the function of photographs. What do they do alone? And what do they do when they are with the text? Arnold poses two more questions about linguistic facilities and photographic understanding: "Does an image need to perform linguistically as the practice of 'reading' would imply it has to?","Are we bound up in the conventions and restrictions of the metaphors of our own language?" Her claim is that though the images are non-discursive formations, they facilitate the transference of the physical into the conceptual and therefore, "they can represent what cannot be said, because the construction of images is not dependent upon the use of grammar and syntax, which require dependent clauses, serial sentences and such like."[173]

What photography achieves is not only the veracity of things but also the forgetfulness of contemporary society of its own history, as Martin remarks.

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[172] *Ibid*., p.5

[173]Arnold, 2002, p.451

Yet the muted characteristic of a photograph and its inability to give the "reality" in contrast to its ability to suspend the moment of existence brings forth the parameter of "interpretation." Here, J.J. Long suggests that photography, which can be regarded as a kind of belated symptom of familial and collective history, needs to be mediated through a process of narration so that through the subjective faculty of temporal context, it becomes knowable, most importantly communicable.[174]

On the other hand, language alone is seen as a constraint against producing histories where visual histories are considered crucial for their ability to offer historical analysis using different kinds of perception and knowledge. When conventional understanding of photograph as a visualization of the text, or the text as captioning the image is put aside, it can be seen that they emerge together. Visual narratives run parallel to, and intersect with verbally perceived norms. Moreover, in the intersections between these narratives, the notion of memory – as a thing to be possessed – is scrutinized and deconstructed to create a new type of subject-object relationship.[175] By this way, construction of a historical knowledge is managed. However, regarding the relationship between photography and history, Barthes points out that: "History is hysterical; it is constituted only if we consider it, and only if we look at it and in order to look at it we must be excluded from it."[176]

Austerlitz's exclusion can be related to his academic position, too, as an architectural historian. Yet his use of 'montage principle', which, in order to

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[174] J.J. Long, "History, Narrative, and Photography in W.G. Sebald's Die Ausgewanderten", *Modern Language Review*, 98.1 (2003), p.126

[175] Arnold, 2002, p.451

[176] Barthes, "History As Separation", 1981, p.6

write on and quote from history, requires 'ripping' the fragments out of their historical context, providing commentary on them and putting them together, as can be explained by referring to Morton's discussion of the issue of afterlife in Benjamin theory of history.[177] This is exactly what the narrator recalls:

> Austerlitz told me that he sometimes sat here for hours, laying out these photographs or other from his collection the wrong way up, as if playing a game of patience, and that then, one by one, he turned them over, always with a new sense of surprise at what he saw, pushing the pictures back and forth and over each other, arranging them in an order depending on their family resemblances, or withdrawing them from the game until either there was nothing left but the grey table-top, or he felt exhausted by the constant effort of thinking and remembering and had to rest on the ottoman.[178]

It is very clear that, Austerlitz' activity of rearranging silent and absent photographs is a way of producing history with photography, in the end leading him to produce different narratives. These possibilities are explained by Hennlich:

> The context of the photograph changes wildly when appropriated differently by a Nazi officer (the Gestapo soldiers) or by a French Jew (Boltanski). In each context the image implies a different narrative, one of impending death, and the other an image of a potential hero, those who fought to save the Jews risking their own life.[179]

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[177] Patricia A. Morton, 'The Afterlife of Buildings: Architecture and Walter Benjamin's Theory of History' in Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, eds., *Rethinking Architectural Historiography* (London/New York, 2006), p.220

[178] Sebald, 2001, p.119

[179] Hennlich, 2007, p.10

So this instability created by history itself and used boldly by Sebald in his works, requires a critical viewer in order to reveal the truth by considering that there is no linear paradigm. In the intersection between fact and fiction, the relationship between image and text – which will be covered in the following section – then becomes crucial to investigate these histories.

2.2 Architecture

2.2.1 Afterlives of Buildings

The significance of built environment, in different scales, is quite visible in *Austerlitz*. Through verbal and visual narratives, it reveals itself not only as representation of architectural elements but also and more importantly, as architectural ideas. As Michael Mack asserts, many critics have so far focused their attention on how Sebald has reworked Walter Benjamin's writings on architecture, photography and natural history in his works.[180]

Therefore, Walter Benjamin's materialist theory of history is important to understand W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*. Yet Patricia A. Morton's reinterpretation of his theory as "afterlife of buildings," opens a new perspective on what Sebald proposes in terms of architectural history and more importantly, architectural historiography. Morton uses Benjamin's theory as a model to propose the possibility of examining architectural artifacts through their histories/life stories in order to liberate them from a normalizing context which actually causes reduction in political content. By this way, social and political histories, which are unpredictable at the moment of conception, can be

[180] Michael Mack, "Between Elias Canetti and Jacques Derrida: Satire and the Role of Fortifications in the Work of W.G. Sebald", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.233

examined by "an*"* architectural historian, as one of many potential readers.[181] In Benjamin's discourse, a stable location defined by disciplinary, national, racial, geographic, or psychic positions, cannot determine the historian's access to truth. Then "the" architectural historian – "the" historian in general – loses his authority in creating another universalizing narrative, rather he recontextualizes and reinterprets which serve "as a starting point for extended critiques of ways of looking and spectatorship." By putting importance on "a" reader, he once again challenges traditional history's means and methods.

According to Benjamin, the materiality of architecture has utmost importance because, as Morton explains, it can physically demonstrate the operation of reification and commodity fetishism. As architecture has the characteristic to make visible the transience of the "new" and the lie of the promise of progress, it becomes a "witness" in Benjamin's terms. It does so, because within the commodity culture it physically embodies "outmoded styles and functions beyond their moment of fashion."[182]

Just like Benjamin's conception, the places and the things narrated in *Austerlitz,* without memory stand as documents of the enigmatic and persistent presence of the past. Gay Hawkins claims that "The affective resonance of the discarded or forgotten thing gives access to an historical reality that escapes usual constructions of history" because left-over things sinking into themselves generate a kind of doubling of history. In that perspective, Sebald uses materiality not to fetishize them but rather, to perform a kind of memory work

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[181] Morton, 2006, p.226

[182] *Ibid*., p.215

on them, in order to confront the past as a source of philosophical reflection about loss, destruction and grief.[183]

This is a struggle against the myth of progress, and against a conventional understanding of architectural history that values the intentions of architects. The *Arcades Project*, which is Benjamin's primary example, presents metaphors for and images of the operation of history, as they act as concrete manifestations of the archaic, as in the cases of the interior of the bourgeois home, the ruin, and Paris as transformed by Haussmann. His attempt reveals forgotten histories and the "waste products" neglected over time.[184]

However, the artwork, that perished in the history's dynamic, marks and represents historical experience and therefore, needs a critic who extracts the "truth content", because the truth content is obscured by the material content. As Morton continues to explain, the critic must start with a commentary before criticism– just like deciphering a script in order to read the underlying text. By this way, he/she performs a transformation of the artwork, which is a destructive act. In a metaphorical context, the commentator then stands as the chemist, where the critic plays the role of the alchemist. Benjamin, in his study of *Treuerspiel*, explains this process:

> This transformation of material content into truth content makes the decrease in effectiveness, whereby the attraction of earlier charms diminishes decade by decade, into the basis for a rebirth, in which all ephemeral beauty is completely stripped off, and the work stans as a ruin.[185]

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[183] Gay Hawkins, "History in Things – Sebald and Benjamin on Transience and Detritus", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.168

[184] Morton, 2006, p.216

[185] *Ibid*., p.217

What Benjamin emphasizes is the power of time, which separates the truth and the material contents from each other, therefore, leaving the truth content in the ruins of past, in other words, in the experience of what is past. While the substance of the work must be destroyed in order to reveal the truth content, the material content requires analysis because of its historical character. Then what the commentator does is to make an analysis on the residual content, while the role of the critic is to complete the process of destruction by "mortifying" it. By this way, history and criticism becomes inextricably linked. As history writing means to "quote" history, where quoting requires "ripping out of context", Benjamin's criticism consists of "ripping" as a method. He separates the fragments of the work from their historical context, provides commentary on them and puts them together as a practice that he calls "montage principle".[186]

This principle is also adopted by Sebald in his literary experimentations, as indicated in the related literature. Gay Hawkins explains that Sebald adopted montage principle in order prevent "false absolutes" in the course of history. This new method envisaged by Benjamin, provides him with a condition of readability of documents, which then allows him to recover a historical narrative against the construction of history. In Sebald's perspective, it is not only the montage of the fragments but also the montage of points of view which offers intersections of the objective and the subjective.[187]

In this process of ripping out of context, Morton draws attention to what Adorno states on the usefulness of the artwork. According to him, the two phases of the life of an artwork help critic. These are "pre-history" and the

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[186] *Ibid.*

[187] Hawkins, 2009, p.170

"post-history". Post-history notion is developed by Benjamin as "afterlife," as an issue of translation. Translation is not a literal likeness, as expected to be, but rather a transformation that changes its language and usage, where its function can outlast their creator by leaving his intentions behind.[188]

Morton contributes to this conception by saying that, in terms of architectural history, "afterlife" shifts critical attention away from the "context" and intention of the architect thus the moment of creation. It proposes translations of use and interpretations that occur over time. In understanding complex interaction between past and present, Morton compares Sigfried Gideon and Walter Benjamin in order to offer a clear framework. Gideon sees nineteenth-century iron and glass architecture as precursor to twentieth-century steel and concrete buildings. In the course of history, "progress" (my emphasis) left them "musty" and irrelevant. On the contrary, Benjamin refuses this instrumental Hegelianism.[189] Just as Hawkins notes, modernity's "progress" was continual change as eternal recurrence: "The industrial system alienated people from the realities of production and turned things into reified objects of desire." The rise of fashion system caused an accelerated fetishization in the commodity culture, which exposed the destructiveness by shortening the life of things. Like Sebald, Benjamin sees destruction as a condition of possibility for the experience of life and philosophical truth. But unlike Sebald, Hawkins states, Benjamin is interested in the creative potential of change which in return produces new relations.[190] According to Benjamin, "mustiness" provides an opportunity to narrate alternative technological and economical histories, because they are products of culture and economic structures of development.

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[188] Morton, 2006, pp.219-22

[189] *Ibid*., p.220

[190] Hawkins, 2009, p.171

Then their materiality, resisting easy erasure, remains within the city as a reminder of the "lack of progress".[191] (my emphasis)

Regarding specifically the example of Paris arcades, Benjamin states that he pursues the origins of the forms and the mutations where he locates the origin in the economic facts. However, Morton notes that economic facts alone do not determine the history of the arcades in contrast to Marxist matrix of superstructure. Rather, complex relationship between economy and the history of Ur-phenomena[192] in which their forms develop out of changes in their economic foundation. In this critical transformation, one more step is required to make the meaning clear. "Dialectical image", which is again formed by ripping historical entities from history's continuity, is an outcome of momentary conjunction of elements of the past and the present.[193]

In the same manner, W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, which is considered as a form of "alternative Holocaust museum" by the author himself,[194], derives its manifesting capability from metaphysical outlook, according to Tom M. Lee, that posits an exclusive divide between the living and the non-living.[195] In its challenge to represent inaccessible or unspeakable, just like the photograph, architecture finds itself a place in the ongoing text not as an expression of a

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[191] Morton, 2006, p.222

[192] "Ur-phenomenon, in Goethe's theory, is a primal, natural form that makes instantaneously visible fundamental principles more generally applicable to a species of phenomena. The general is contained in the particular. Further, the Ur-phenomenon contains within it the future development of that class of things. The arcade is one of Benjamin's Ur-phenomena that in which objective laws are made visible." *Ibid.*

[193] *Ibid*., p.223

[194] Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p.19

[195] Lee, 2012, p.109

theme but as a "meta-image" for this manifesting sensibility, thus creating a dwelling place in space and time. Axel Englund explains this relationship as a need to construct a meaning where the original has been lost, and as a need which is intimately associated with the mode of allegory, resulting in the recovery of the past.[196] By this way, it provides a transition between past and present that scoops out them static definitions. Benjamin explains it as follows:

> It isn't that the past casts its light on the present or the present casts its light on the past: rather, an image is that in which the past and the present flash into constellation. In other words, image is dialectic at a standstill.[197]

What is important here is that in Morton's discussion of Benjamin, buildings do not constitute "fleeting images" in the literal sense. Rather, they can flash into unintentional constellations, as they are perceived through use and habit. In the case of *Austerlitz*, Lee emphasizes that Sebald gives the reader a panoramic view of the impeccable shot[198] by creating an "irrational and invisible matrix" within the cultural maps of cityscapes. Cities, which are bound to temporality measured by the rhythms of cultural power, are productions of change. Then, whether it is ideological or technological in character, as Kimberly Mair explains, change operates in the built environment, leaving its marks on the urban landscape. Thus it leads to an engagement of active sensorial perception where the subject is reiteratively constitutes "both historical cultural subjectivity and relatively unique subjectivity marked by

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[196] Axel, Englund "British Rail Katabasis: W.G. Sebald's 'Day Return'", *German Life and Letters*, 67.1 (2014), p.125

[197] Morton, 2006, p.223

[198] Lee, 2012, p.8

particular experiences as lived or imagined."[199] It consecutively reminds one of Walter Benjamin's remark on how environments are perceived:

> What makes the very first glimpse of a village, a town, in the landscape so incomparable and irretrievable is the rigorous connection between foreground and distance. Habit has not yet done its work. As soon as we find our bearings, the landscape vanishes at a stroke like the facade of a house as we enter it. . . . Once we begin to find our way about, that earliest picture can never be restored.[200]

This is a process of awakening from the phantasmagoria of capitalism, in Morton's words, and in this way general laws of capitalism – which is entirely without precedent, in that it is a religion which offers not the reform of existence but its complete destruction[201] – are made visible by the arcade itself. Then the arcades, which are fallen in their collusion with capitalism and redeemed by the fragments of historical truth, reveal the truth contained in the neglected things – objects and activities housed in the arcades.[202]

According to Benjamin, capitalism celebrates the principle of capital accumulation, whereas in the narrative voice of Jacques Austerlitz, the reader becomes familiar with another parameter. "Time" introduces the element of speed and by this way, increases the process of destruction. On the other hand, as Michael Mack explains, time does not affect only temporal dimension, but also regulates the relationship of inhabitants to space. The most specific example of this is the first encounter of the narrator and Austerlitz. In their meeting in Antwerp Centraal Station, Austerlitz mentions that the

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[199] Mair, 2007, p.245

[200] Morton, 2006, p.223

[201] Mack, 2009, p.235

[202] Morton, 2006, p.224

synchronisation of the railway timetables towards the middle of the nineteenth century increased not only the speed of travel but also the degree of distance that separates people from each other geographically.[203] In Lee's words, "Austerlitz specifies, shortly after his discourse on the history of fortification, it is a certain 'fascination with the idea of network', of which the railway system is the principal exemplar, that is the defining aspect of his interest. Indeed, throughout the book, what is encapsulated in this 'idea of a network' is referred to again and again. A network recommends a conception of reality in which things are always growths."[204]

What is intriguing here is Sebald's suggestion of power relations. As Catalina Botez remarks, imperialist, colonial or capitalist times never really change, they only get renamed according to Sebald,[205] so buildings and histories reflected in *Austerlitz,* do not act as a Holocaust memorial but rather they embody structures of power and oppression. Though they are dark and nightmarish, they are keys to Jacques Austerlitz, the protagonist, for understanding historical and personal knowledge.[206]

The buildings described for their differing aspects, then become suggestive for their interrelationship to their parts. According to Lee, each part of a building obscures something important and is informed by imperceptible relationships with other parts and with a history, stretches back in time. In this sense, there occurs diverse but interconnected aspects that are temporarily and precariously

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[203] Mack, 2009, p.235

[204] Lee, 2012, p.112

[205] Catalina Botez, "Tragic Travels and Postmnemonic Alterity in W.G. Sebald's Austerlitz: A Peratologic Analysis", *Literature & Aesthetics*, 21.2 (2011), p.150

[206] Modlinger, 2012, p.348

unified in the experience of the personages who pass through them, so they create a condition that cannot be reduced to a singular perspective.[207] Moreover, against a commonly shared idea in the related literature about the relationship of built environment to memory in a symbolical framework, what *Austerlitz* achieves is actually to bring discrete spaces together – just like photographic photomontage – by means of defining new relationships in their multiple afterlives.

2.2.2 Railways & Railway Stations

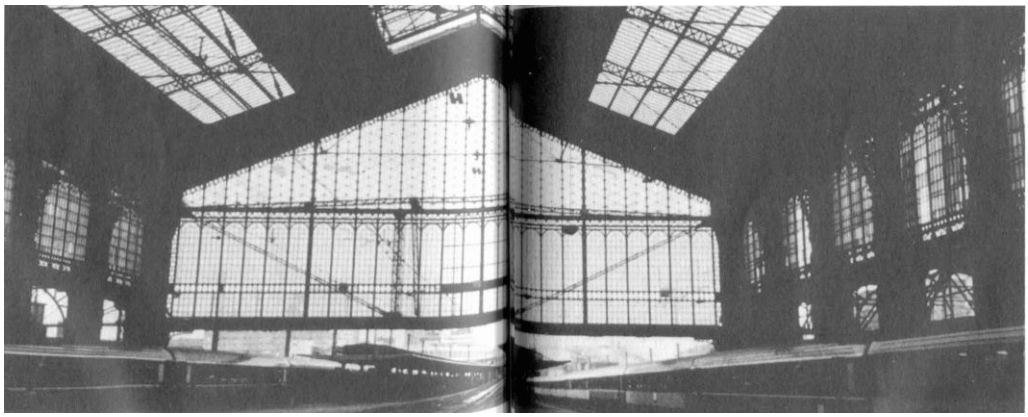

Figure 2.2.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.290-291

The most visible example of the hegemony of modernism is probably the railway stations. Jacques Austerlitz, whose study area is the architecture of capitalist era, specifically is interested in railway transportation. According to him, "the entire railway system", which embodies "the idea of a network" is critical to understand the modern age. Train station as an image seems to reflect the liberating aspects of modernity by providing high speed

[207] Tom M. Lee, "'At All Events, in Retrospect I Became Preoccupied': The Prose Fictional Metaphysics of W.G. Sebald" (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2012), p.113, Web. 13 Jan.2015

transportation and blurring the geographical borderlines. However, against the intentions, as Kimberly Mair discusses, railway stands as an ambivalent image because train station, which is strongly bound up with colonial power, "produces travel as a form of experiential and ontological accumulation that has a paradoxically static quality, despite its capacity for spatial malleability."[208] Thus the vision of both imprisonment and liberation is created in train stations, just as reflected by Austerlitz, emphasizing that "travelers wait there as if held in captivity."

> The increasing speed of travel enhances rather than diminishes a sense of despair that takes hold of isolated individuals over the course of processes of decay and entropy, because these processes are marked and constituted precisely by the rapid movement of time.[209]

Time as the governor of the modern era engages with railway station and they both become decisive elements of the oppressive universe. Rupture between "the space of experience" and "the horizon of expectation" – as Amir Eshel refers to Koselleck's argument, and to Heine's declaration of the death of space – both reflect a new need for "modern consciousness of temporality and space". In literary modernism, modernity defines itself through a radical concentration on the present. Eshel notes that it is a type of the Nietzschean "life" which aims to loose the burden of the previous epochs by means of delving into the now and its promise of unprecedented movement through space. Sebald's *Austerlitz* is considered to be written in the same manner where the protagonist's struggle against "time" is reflected through a web of textual references that target this consciousness and thus modernity and its perils which are symbolized by

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[208] Mair, 2007, p.239

[209] Mack, 2009, p.236

railway transportation.[210] Moreover, as Michael Mack shows, Austerlitz, who is fascinated by the destructive aspects of presumably productive and life-enhancing inventions, focuses on ambivalent aspects in their cohesive unity such as double binds and polyphony of voices. This is described by J.J. Long as a "negative teleology" which results in the "decline of cultures, the diasporic scattering of peoples, environmental destruction and the inexorable decay of matter."[211]

Therefore, reflected both literally and metaphorically, acceleration of time and increase of the speed in modern travel cause a sense of isolation, which becomes a signifier of both personal loss and grammar of loss that marks the post-Baudelaireian poetic consciousness: "all that is present is already past, already lost." [212] Thus railways become important physical materials to investigate those losses, both physical and allegorical, through time. Sebald reflects a kind of view that overlaps with Patricia Morton's concept "afterlife of buildings."

2.2.2.1 Antwerp Centraal Station

Antwerp Centraal Station comes to the fore as the opening scene of *Austerlitz*. It is the place where the narrator and Jacques Austerlitz come across for the first time and it is one of the railway stations appeared throughout the story. Moreover, it is the very first place, beginning in the very first pages of the book, where Sebald's notion of the integration of fiction into facts shows itself. As Martin Modlinger explains, Sebald's historical research of the station is mostly based on the article *Mobiliteit en Patrimonium verzoenen* that Patrick van

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[210] Eshel, 2003, p.82

[211] Mack, 2009, p.236

[212] Eshel, 2003, p.84

Buyten published in the journal *A+ Architectuur* in 1992[213] and it becomes materialized within the textual narrative as the narrator asks questions about the history of the building. Austerlitz begins with a general history of Belgium at that time saying that it was a little patch of yellowish gray barely visible on the map of the world. He then talks about its interest in Africa which represented boundless optimism for its citizens. They also believed that their country was just about to become a great new economic power as an outcome of its colonial enterprises based on raw-material exchange. This belief, as Austerlitz explains, was due to their long dependency on foreign rule and their divided and disunited social and political structure. So under the reign of King Leopold – "under whose auspices such apparently inexorable progress was being made"[214] in Austerlitz's words of subtle criticism – it was decided that the money which suddenly and abundantly became available should be used to erect public buildings to bring international prestige to his aspiring state. For this purpose, the architect Louis Delacenserie was assigned to design the station of the Flemish metropolis.

As Austerlitz continues, the building, which was opened in 1905 after a decade of planning and building, was influenced by the railway station of Lucerne in Switzerland, dating back to 1856, due to the interest of the king himself in the concept of the dome, which – specifically in Lucerne – exceeds the usual modest height of railway buildings. Thus the dome became a dominant element in the design of Antwerp Centraal Station with a further reference to the Pantheon in Rome. **(fig.2.2.2)**

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[213] Modlinger, 2012, pp.344-362

[214] Sebald, 2001, p.9

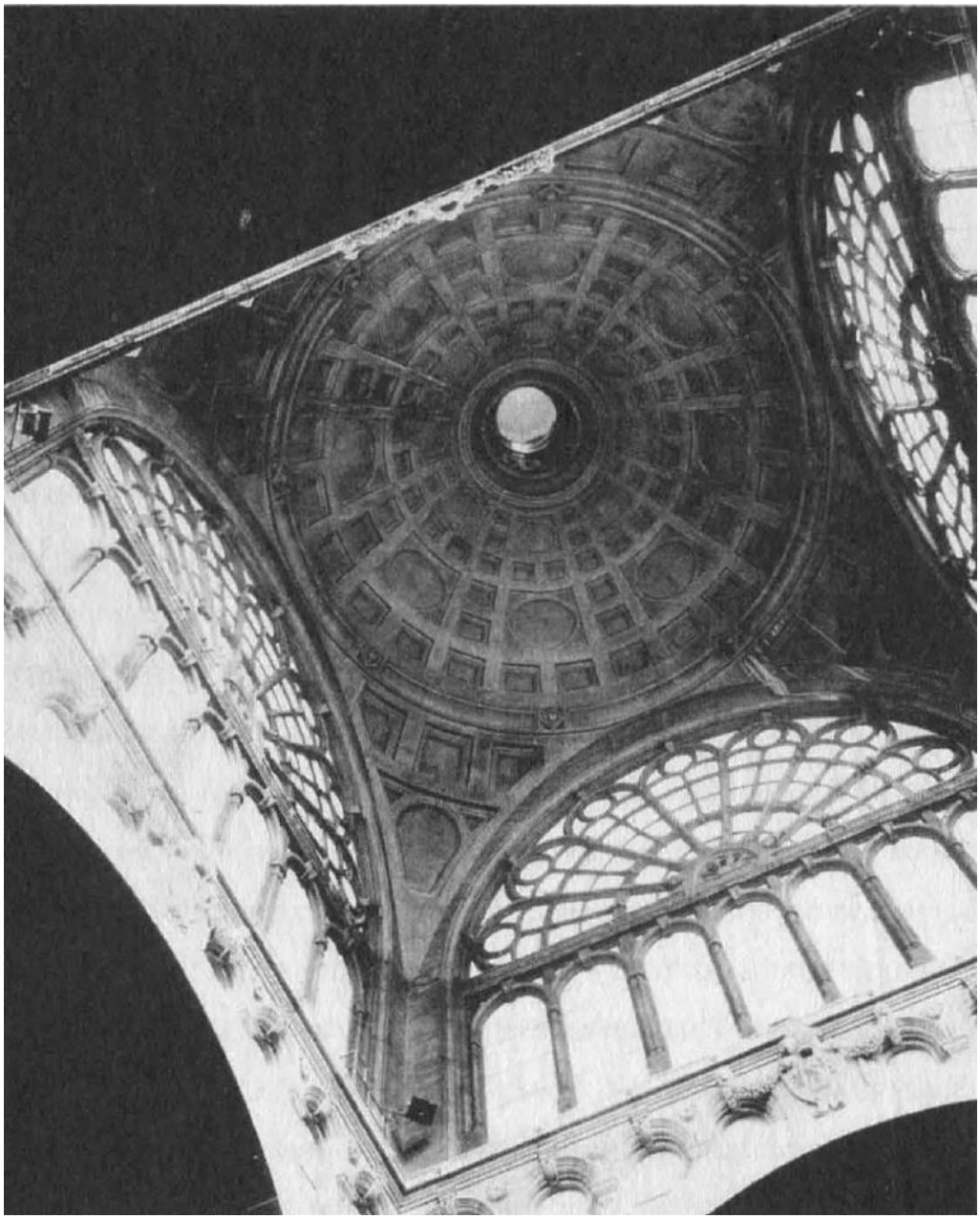

Figure 2.2.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.11

Then, the narrative gets intriguing because the narrator inserts a footnote in first person speech and an image related to Lucerne hinting at the fire which broke out in the building in February 1971. So another historical remark –

history of destruction – is added to the narrative by means of not only telling, but also of showing in a Sebaldian fashion. Though it is not certain that the photograph depicting the fire is of Lucerne, it animates in the reader's mind by triggering the impulse to authenticate it. **(fig.2.2.3)**

Figure 2.2.3: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.11

In addition to this segment of "afterlife" as a natural cause transforming the material body of the station, which is fictitiously formed as one of the memories of the narrator himself, his very knowledge is also introduced to the

narrative as an ordinary detail as he mentions how the waiting room was turned into a staff canteen. This place strikes the narrator as another Nocturama triggered by his previous visit to the zoo where he says:

> When I entered the great hall of the Centraal Station with its dome arching sixty meters high above it, my first thoughts, perhaps triggered by my visit to the zoo and the sight of the dromedary, was that this magnificent although then severely dilapidated foyer ought to have cages for lions and leopards let into its marble niches, and aquaria for sharks, octopuses, and crocodiles, just as some zoos, conversely, have little railway trains in which, you can, so to speak, travel to the farthest corners of the earth.[215]

This confusion, which is not accounted for simply the haziness of the narrator's memory, is directly "due to an initial, architectural and atmospheric confusion between the interiors of the two buildings revealing the idea of building enclosing not just a specific space but an entire universe."[216] This experience is also given from the perspective of Austerlitz where the narrator quotes him, "… in such stupendous fashion that even today, said Austerlitz, exactly as the architect intended, when we step into the entrance hall we are seized by a sense of being beyond the profane, in a cathedral consecrated to international traffic and trade."[217] In that sense, while referring to the design process of the building, Austerlitz also goes one step further and produces a view that blends all this process with its higher associations in a general context of the past:

> Delacenserie borrowed the main elements of his monumental structure from the palaces of the Italian Renaissance, but he also struck Byzantine and Moorish notes, and perhaps when I arrived, said Austerlitz, I myself had noticed the round gray and white

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[215] *Ibid*., p.6

[216] Lee, 2012, p.116

[217] Sebald, 2001, pp.10

> granite turrets, the sole purpose of which was to arouse medieval associations in the minds of railway passengers. However laughable in itself, Delacenserie's eclecticism, uniting the past and future in the Centraal Station with its marble stairway in the foyer and the steel and glass roof spanning the platforms, was in fact a logical stylistic approach to the new epoch, said Austerlitz, and it was also appropriate, he continued, that in Antwerp Station the elevated level from which the gods looked down on visitors to the Roman Pantheon should display, in hierarchical oreder, the deities of the nineteenth century – mining, industry, transport, trade, and capital. For halfway up the walls of the entrance hall, as I must have noticed, there were stone escutcheons bearing symbolic sheaves of corn, crossed hammers, winged wheels, and so on, with the heraldic motif of the beehive standing not, as one mightg at first think, for nature made serviceable to mankind, or even industrious labor as a social good, but symbolizing the principle of capital accumulation.[218]

Among these emblems, the mighty clock – "placed above the only baroque element in the entire ensemble, the cruciform stairway which leads from the foyer to the platforms" becomes prominent as the physical resemblance of "time". Time, then, combining the whole railway system together becomes a representation of the power that defines a new relationship between past, present and space. Austerlitz implies that it acts as the status of the emperor in the Pantheon, and looking down on the passengers, it forces them to adjust their activities to its demands. Yet he recalls that time gained its whole power only when the railway timetables were synchronized and only when they were all standardized around the middle of the nineteenth century. Here, what Austerlitz – and of course Sebald himself – points out can also be directly read in the light of the "afterlife" concept. This time does not correspond to the physical changes in the environment, but to the conceptual changes indicated in the example of Antwerp Centraal Station, where Austerlitz provides a persective how time and space operate together, beyond intentions. It is the

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[218] *Ibid.*, pp.10-12

modern times that introduce gradually an understanding of time and space which is described by him as illusionistic and illusory. Time hastens people through the gigantic spaces, in which it causes a removal of boundaries between remote places. Thus, experienced directly in travelling, Austerlitz notices that whenever one comes home from elsewhere, it is due to this illusory relationship that it cannot be felt quite sure if one has really been abroad. This view is seen by the narrator as a gradual approach to a kind of historical metaphysic, in bringing remembered events back to life.

2.2.2.2 Liverpool Street Station & Broad Street Station

Liverpol Street Station is integrated to the narrative – in the sixth encounter in March 1997 – as a continuation of Austerlitz's telling of his unstable mental state during his stay in England while he and the narrator sit in the room at the back of Austerlitz's house in Alderney Street. As the narrator tells what Austerlitz told him, losing his capability in academic life and turning on in himself, in the end, urged Austerlitz to take long walks after the sun goes down. Describing his excursions as nocturnal quests, Austerlitz then talked about the remote areas of London where he wandered through. Several times he passed through the stations thinking of a known face from his past was approaching to him among the passengers in the tiled passages. Remembering with a hazy mind, tiny fragments from distant times, Austerlitz noticed that Liverpool Street Station was one of the places where he had several such experiences. **(fig.2.2.4)** Then he remarked:

> Before work began to rebuild it at the end of the 1980s this station, with its main concourse fifteen to twenty feet below street level, was one of the darkest and most sinister places in London, a kind of entrance to the underworld, as it has often been described. The ballast between the tracks, the cracked sleepers, the brick walls with their stone bases, the cornices and panes of the tall windows, the wooden kiosks for the ticket inspectors, and the towering cast-

iron columns with their palmate capitals were all covered in a greasy black layer formed, over the course of a century, by coke dust and soot, steam, sulfur, and diesel oil. Even on sunny days only a faint grayness, scarcely illuminated at all by the globes of the station lights, came through the glass roof over the main hall, an in this eternal dusk, which was full of a muffled babble of voices, a quiet scraping and trampling of feet, innumerable people passed in great tides, disembarking from the trains or boarding them, coming together, moving apart, and being held up at barriers and bottlenecks like water against a weir.[219]

Figure 2.2.4: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.128

[219] *Ibid*., p.128

Then making a jump to one of the earlier lives of the station in the vortex of past time – which is the pre-history of the site – he mentioned that once, on this site, where the station stood, marshy meadows frozen over months in cold winters had extended to the city walls. It is the so-called Little Ice Age as mentioned in the description of the picture of Schelde in Antwerp. Sharing the same timeline, the Londoners meanwhile were strapping bone runners under their shoes and skating there and sometimes going on until midnight in the flickering light of the bonfires and on the ice in heavy braziers. Later on, as Austerlitz told the narrator, "the marshes were progressively drained, elm trees were planted, market gardens, fish ponds, and white sandy paths were laid out to make a place where the citizens could walk in their leisure time, and soon pavilions and country houses were being built all the way out to Forest Park and Arden."[220]

Without showing any written archival material, he continues that until the 17th century the priory of the order of St Mary of Bethlehem stood on the site of the present main station concourse and the Great Eastern Hotel. By this way, another building– the place where Austerlitz had never been before – is associated with the history of the station. Furthermore, Austerlitz told the narrator how the hospital, which originally belonged to the priory outside the Bishopsgate, was founded by Simon Fitz Mary for insane and destitute persons and how it went down in history under the name of Bedlam. So the concept of afterlife appears in Austerlitz's attempt to grasp the multiple phases or layers of the area of Liverpool Street Station and to bring them all together within the Station itself:

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[220] *Ibid*., p.129

> I kept almost obsessively trying to imagine – through the ever-changing maze of walls – the location in that huge space of the rooms where the asylum inmates were confined, and often wondered whether the pain and suffering accumulated on this site over the centuries had ever really ebbed away, or whether they might not still, as I sometimes thought when I felt a cold breath of air on my forehead, be sensed as we passed through them.[221]

Making a remark of transience between what is past and what is passing away in present, he, by this way, sets a concrete example of his theoretical ideas of time and continues to give further information:

> Or I imagined the bleach-fields stretching westwards from Bedlam, saw the white lengths of linen spread out on the green grass and the diminutive figures of weavers and washerwomen, and on the far side of the bleach-fields the places where the dead were buried once the church-yards of London could hold no more.[222]

Thus the dead, just like the living, are moved out into less densely populated districts, as the area becomes too cramped. However, as the advent of the dead is never stopped, graves are dug to accommodate them, until all the bones in the cemetery lie jumbled up together. **(fig.2.2.5)** These over four hundred skeletons, piled up over the years, came out, according to Austerlitz's notes, in the excavations in 1984, during the demolition of Broad Street Station, which was built in 1865 on the site of the former burial grounds and bleachfields. To support his view, Austerlitz refers to the archaeologists' findings and says: "on average the skeletons of eight people had been found in every cubic meter of earth removed from the trench."[223]

This cemetery which is now ruined, as Tom M. Lee points out, brings out a critical relationship between "ruin" and "cemetery" as varieties of

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[221] *Ibid*., pp.129-130

[222] *Ibid*., p.130

[223] *Ibid*.

uninhabitable or inhabited architecture. This means that a ruined cemetery represents a kind of double ruination since "the dead were inflicting their presence on the sites designed by mortals to preserve their memory."[224] While referring to history of destruction once again, actually Austerlitz brings out the "spectral geographies," in which sudden and displacing punctum of pasts and presents occur.[225] By this way, going nearly two or three phases back in the strata of history becomes very possible.

Figure 2.2.5: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.131

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[224] Lee, 2012, p.150

[225] Wylie, 2007, p.182

In this process, just like the methodology of archaeologists, Austerlitz tries to show – he also tries to understand, rather than explaining with an authorial approach – how this part of the city was transformed during the 17th and 18th centuries, by adding details to complete his previous discussion of modernity. In this regard, the quote below is crucial to understand his way of dealing with history:

> In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the city had grown above these strata of soil mingled with the dust and bones of decayed bodies into a warren of putrid streets and houses for the poorest Londoners, cobbled together out of beams, clods of clay, and any other building material that came to hand. Around 1860 and 1870, before work on the construction of the two northeast terminals began, these poverty-stricken quarters were forcibly cleared and vast quantities of soil, together with the bones buried in them, were dug up and removed, so that the railway lines, which on the engineers' plans looked like muscles and sinews in an anatomical atlas, could be brought to the outskirts of the City. Soon the site in front of Bishopsgate was nothing but a gray-brown morass, a no-man's-land where not a living soul stirred. The little river Wellbrook, the ditches and ponds, the crakes and snipe and herons, the elms and mulberry trees, Paul Pindar's deer park, the inmates of Bedlam and the starving paupers of Angel Alley, Peter Street, Sweet Apple Court, and Swan Yard had all gone, and gone now too are the millions and millions of people who passed through Broadgate and Liverpool Street stations day in, day out, for an entire century.[226]

Here, introducing to the text a map of the area appears as the only archival material apart from the photographs. However, due to its low image quality, the only legible names are the ones which indicate "Liverpool Street Station" and "Bishopsgate Ward without St Botolph without Bishopsgate" in capital letters. **(fig.2.2.6)**

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[226] Sebald, 2001, pp.130-132

Figure 2.2.6: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.133

Yet, what this map significantly reveals is the scale of railway network within the city. In this regard, it can be argued that just like the architectural scale of the buildings, this alien like creature in the urban scale looks very monstrous in a Sebaldian fashion when compared to the graphic imprints of the modest settlement surrounding it. Here, it is important to note that what the map functions is not to criticize directly the unnecessity of this modern invasion, but rather, when considered together with the additional information on the previous formation of the area given by Austerlitz, to show how big this area is as destructed during the construction of the station. So it can also be said that as a way of "quoting history," Sebald – through his characters – once more chooses to "show" the cases with its direct or indirect implications and leaves the reader with their authenticity just to intrigue their will of investigation. Accordingly, *Austerlitz* proves once again its archival characteristics which are directed towards a competent reader.

What is more, the discovery by Austerlitz of Ladies' Waiting Room sets another mark for the history of Liverpool Street Station, in terms of its afterlife. It becomes apparent as Austerlitz notices one of the porters, sweeping up the paving. Following him by intuition, Austerlitz suddenly finds himself on the other side of the tall fence, facing the entrance to the Ladies' Waiting Room, of which he has been unaware until that moment. As soon as he enters the large room, he realizes that it has obviously been disused for years, as he tells:

> Minutes or even hours may have passed while I stood in that empty space beneath a ceiling which seemed to float at a vertiginous height, unable to move from the spot, with my face raised to the icy gray light, like moonshine, which came through the windows in a gallery beneath the vaulted roof and hung above me like a tight-meshed net or a piece of thin, fraying fabric. Although this light, a profusion of dusty glitter, one might almost say, was very bright near the ceiling, as it sank lower it looked as if it were being absorbed by the walls and the deeper reaches of the room, as if it merely added to the gloom and were running down in black streaks,

> rather like rainwater running down the smooth trunks of beech trees or over the cast concrete façade of a building.[227]

He then continues with a slight shift in the narrative, as his past begins to flash up as constellations. Activated with his entrance, orders of space and time are fractured by giving way to the dislocation of mundane geographies and linear chronologies.[228] "From time to time, and just for a split second," he says:

> I saw huge halls open up, with rows of pillars and colonnades leading far into the distance, which vaults and brickwork arches bearing on them many-storied structures, with flights of stone steps, wooden stairways and ladders, all leading the eye on and on. I saw viaducts and footbridges crossing deep chasms thronged with tiny figures who looked to me, said Austerlitz, like prisoners in search of some way of escape from their dungeon and the longer I stared upwards with my head wrenched painfully back, the more I felt as if the room where I stood were expanding, going on for ever and ever in probably foreshortened perspective, at the same time turning back into itself in a way possible only in such a deranged universe.[229]

Within this vision, Austerlitz remembers seeing a dome of openwork masonry, with a parapet around it on which, as he describes, "grew ferns, young willows, and various other shrubs [and] herons had built their large untidy nests." Feeling imprisonment and liberation at the same time, he keeps wondering whether it was a ruin or a building in the process of construction. This hazy thought is actually true since, as Austerlitz reveals, the new station arose literally from the ruins of the Liverpool Street. Then, the story evolves to the scraps of memory that Austerlitz begins to remember to form an understanding as "interlocking labyrinthine vaults" that contain not only the history of his

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[227] *Ibid*., pp.134-135

[228] Wylie, 2007, p.182

[229] Sebald, 2001, p.135

own life, but also of the lives of many other people and things going much further back in the past."[230] In the end, Austerlitz finds himself in the midst of a ghostly multiplication, as John Wylie remarks. Therefore, it strikes him with a self discovery that this place must have been the one where he had arrived almost over half a century ago when he had been sent from Prague to England.

2.2.3 Fortresses/Fortified Towns

Talking about marks of pain and tracing countless fine lines through history, the conversation between the narrator and Austerlitz focuses on a painting by Lucas van Valckenborch, and then, leaves its place to the topic of military architecture, after they sit in a bistro in Glove Market. In addition to his "thoughts of the agony of leave-taking and the fear of foreign places" which are not part of architectural history, Austerlitz relates railway architecture to military architecture through a kind of family resemblance and adds: "it is often our mightiest projects that most obviously betray the degree of our insecurity." As in the example of Antwerp, due to the necessity of building defenses in succession, fortresses consist of concentric rings growing steadily outward and reach in the end their natural limits. Touching upon the masters of military architecture, such as Rusenstein, Burgsdorff, Coehoorn and Klengel, Austerlitz remarks that they were persistent, for all their outstanding characteristics, however, he criticizes them too, as they clung to a fundamentally wrong-headed idea: "… the notion that by designing an ideal trace with blunt bastions and ravelins projecting well beyond it, allowing the cannon of the fortress to cover the entire operational area outside the walls, you could make a city as secure as anything in the world can ever be." Although there is a vast literature on the building of fortifications – "the fantastic nature of the geometric, trigonometric, and logistical calculations they record, of the

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[230] *Ibid*., p.136

inflated excesses of the professional vocabulary of fortification and siegecraft"[231] – today, their simplest strategies are all forgotten back in the 17th century. The star-shaped dodecagon behind trenches, derived from the Golden Section, was accepted at that time as the most suitable ground plan, as Austerlitz explains. Through this scheme, the fortification stood out, even for layman, as an emblem both of absolute power and of the ingenuity of the engineers that was put into service for that power. **(fig.2.2.7)** Again through an indirect criticism of "outpacing functional purposes," Austerlitz notes that in the 18th century this pattern did not answer their purpose since it had been forgotten that the largest fortifications would naturally attract the largest enemy forces, so it was not a solution to entrench the surrounding more and more because it limited flexibility by forcing to stay on defensive position whereas the enemy troops had the capacity to move on their own choice of terrain elsewhere. Austerlitz defines this attempt of multiplying the measurements constantly as a tendency towards paranoid elaboration which inevitably drew attention to the weakest point, instead of performing its purpose.

Another criticism of his is directly related to the "time" agent meaning that as architectural plans became more complex, it took more time to construct a fortress. Moreover, before completing it all there was always the probability that further developments would be needed due to the mobile characteristics of war in which everything, both artillery and strategic planning, was decided in movement, not in a state of rest. Thus, that was the challenge that the construction of a fortress had to deal with.

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[231] W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.15

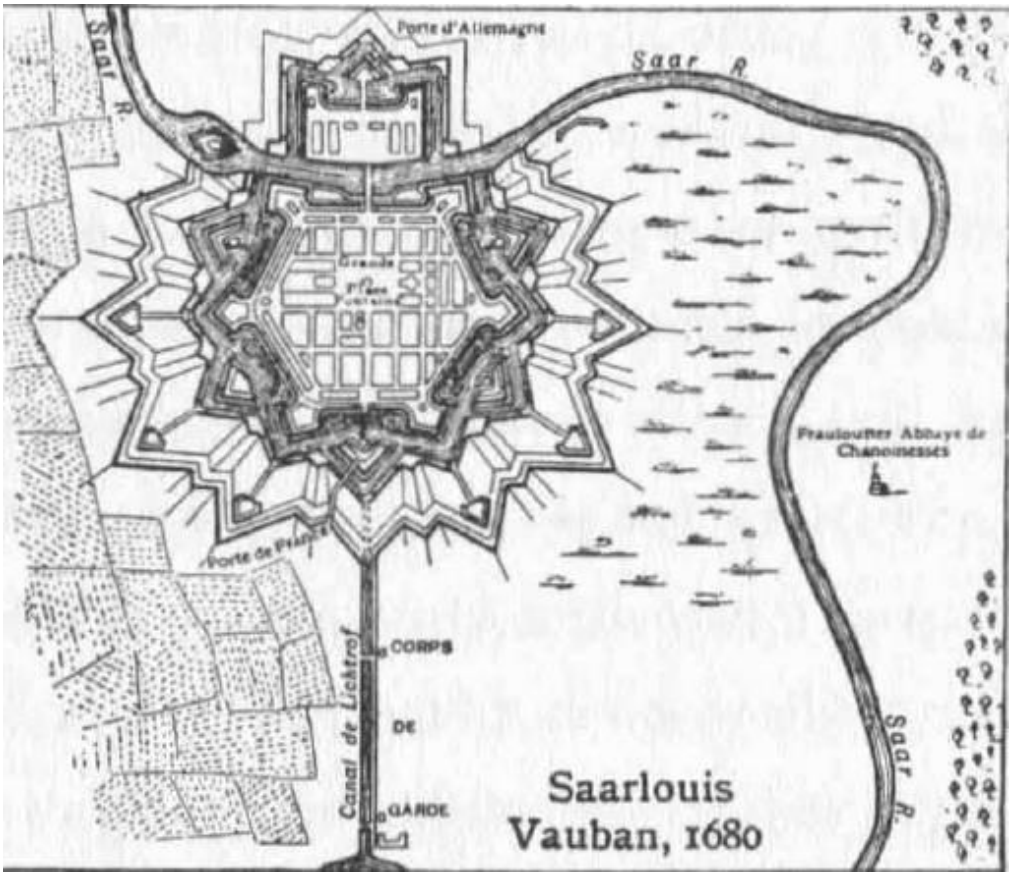

Figure 2.2.7: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.15

2.2.3.1 Breendonk

Antwerp is considered to be one of the clearest illustrations of this challenge, where Austerlitz touches upon the whole insanity of fortification. Just like in the Palace of Justice, here too, he relates its history to the time of the "new kingdom." He recalls that in 1832, the citadel, built by Pacciolo and further fortified with a ring of outworks by the Duke of Wellington, was besieged for three weeks by a French army of fifty thousand men, and finally, in mid-December, the French succeeded. In this history of destruction what surprises Austerlitz is that the conventional thought relied more on rebuilding of the

defenses surrounding the city, more strongly than before, rather than understanding its monstrous results. So eventually, "in 1859 the old citadel and most of the outer forts were leveled and work began on the construction of a new *enceinte* ten miles long, with eight forts situated over half and hour's march away from it." Yet through the contemporary requirements caused by modernity, in less than twenty years, the old logic of the fort building – adding another ring – proved itself to be inadequate due to the longer range of modern guns and increasingly destructive power of explosives. But another thirty years were spent just to build this latest ring six to nine miles away from the *enceinte.* In this process of expansion, what concerns Austerlitz is the potential danger that could invalidate this attempt:

> …whether the expansion of Antwerp beyond the old city boundaries through its rapid industrial and commercial development did not mean that the line of forts ought to be moved yet another three miles further out, which would actually have made it over thirty miles long, bringing it within sight of the outskirts of Mechelen, with the result that the entire Belgian army would have been insufficient to garrison the fortifications.[232]

So, in the end, even though they knew that it was far from being able to meet the actual requirements, the construction process continued. Breendonk was just another example of that, where it proved only within a few months after its completion, just before the outbreak of WWI, that it was completely useless for the defense of the city and the country.

Once more emphasizing that outsize buildings made possible their own destruction, he says: "they are designed from the first with an eye to their later existence as ruins," whereas domestic buildings of smaller than normal size – "the little cottage in the fields, the hermitage, the lockkeeper's lodge, the pavilion for viewing the landscape, the children's bothy in the garden" – at

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[232] Sebald, 2001, p.18

least offer a peaceful existence, unlike the monstrous ones. The quoted sentence above actually illuminates the structure of the book as well, in which many small scale buildings are added just to balance these public buildings to search the past and to mediate Austerlitz's search of his own past.

In this narrative which is fictitiously situated in the 1960s, the history of the fortress after that siege includes its surrender in the period of WWII to the Germans. This information gathered by the narrator from one of the newspaper articles – he does not remember whether it was in the *Gazet van Antwerpen* or *La libre Belgique* – is further furnished with the details revealing that in its afterlife, during the period of Nazi Germany, the fortress was turned into a penal camp between August 1944 and 1947. In the following years, it became a national memorial and a museum of the Belgian Resistance. Sharing the similar point of view with Austerlitz regarding the evaluation of the history of the building, the narrator supports what he has learned with his physical experience of that environment.

The fort in the present time stands on a ground of some ten hectares, on the outskirts of the town, and is set among the fields rather like an island in the sea and surrounded by an embankment, a barbed-wire fence, and a wide moat. This alien like building which does not reveal its architectural layout from any perspective just exists as an outcome of non-human civilization, resembling an entity outside time. While the accompanying photographs show this view by their punctum, the plan of the structure integrated with the textual narrative offers a view of this crab-like creature with its organs. **(fig.2.2.8)** It has far more different associations due to the scale of the map. There is neither an indication of the purposes of the partitions, nor any information on the relationship of the structure with its surroundings. The map shows only lines of transportation, though it is not clear whether they correspond to vehicular roads or to rail roads. Furthermore, probably a part on the left side of the image has

been changed just to build that line, yet these all seem to be only speculations that require further research. Yet the narrator gives only a brief account on its architectural formation during the 1940s:

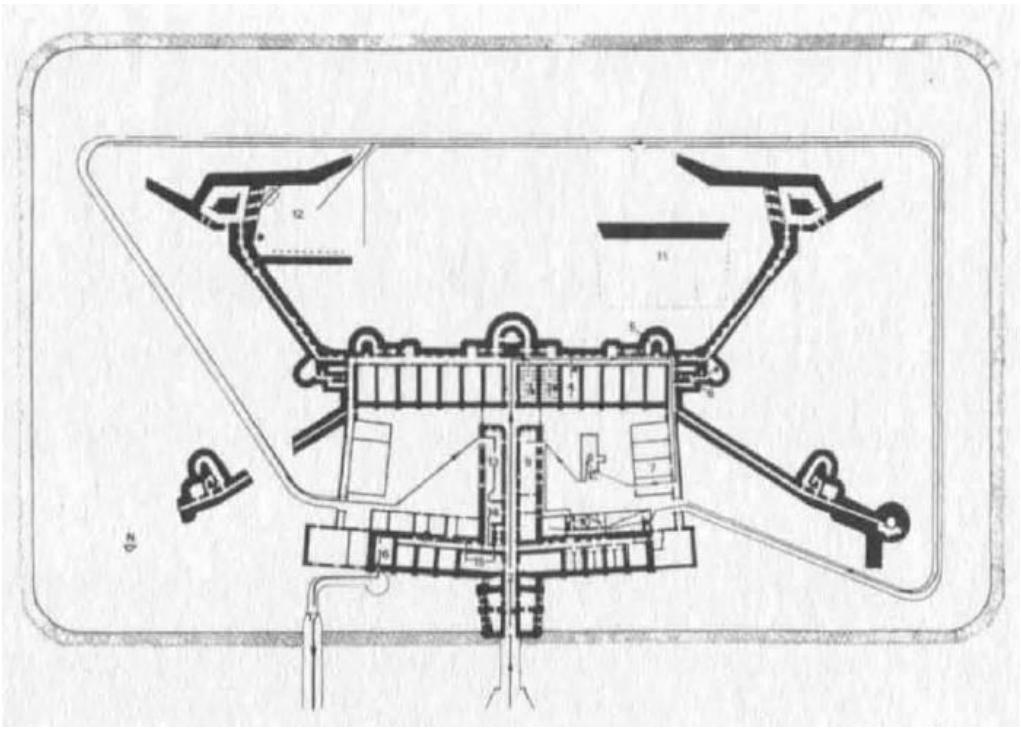

Figure 2.2.8: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.21

> The path round the fort led past the tarred black posts of the execution ground, and the labor site where the prisoners had to clear away the earthworks around the walls, moving over a quarter of a million tons of soil and rubble with only shovels and wheelbarrows to help them… I could not imagine how the prisoners, very few of whom had probably ever done hard physical labor before their arrest and internment, could have pushed these borrows full of heavy detritus over the sun-baked clay of the ground, furrowed by ruts as hard as stone, or through the mire that was churned up after a single day's rain: it was impossible to picture them bracing themselves against the weight until their hearts nearly burst, or think of the overseer beating them about the

> head with the handle of a shovel when they could not move forward.[233]

Rather than simply imagining the life there – based probably on Jean Amery's accounts – the narrator directly experiences the building as he enters the structure, he also enters the past. Then, he confronts its duplicated heaviness and just as he perceives the massiveness of the cement bulk outside, he also experiences the oppressive atmosphere caused by the burden of the past inside.[234] **(fig.2.2.9)** He sees the glass panes of a door on the right into the so-called mess of the SS guards with its scrubbed tables and benches, its bulging stove and the various adages neatly painted on its wall in Gothic lettering. Projecting towards the lives within the remains of the past, in the form of ruins – both physical and allegorical – to be brought into light, the narrator imagines the sight of the good fathers and dutiful sons from Vilsbiburg and Fuhlsbüttel, from the Black Forest and the Bavarian Alps – which asserts the geographical outset of this massive performance of the Nazis.

On the other hand, experiencing its parts – "fourteen stations which the visitor to Breendonk passes between the entrance and the exit" and getting help from the plan as he reads captions, which the reader cannot see – *Former Office, Printing Works, Huts, Jacques Ochs Hall, Solitary Confinement Cell, Mortuary, Relics Store* and *Museum* – the narrator actually delineates the physical conditions. As he says, these stations have been clouded over in the course of time because all the outlines seem to merge in a world illuminated only by a few dim electric bulbs, and cut off forever from the light of nature. Yet with the power of literature, Sebald also adds a symbolic meaning to the narrator's narrative which reveals the mental fractures within this space. This means that

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[233] *Ibid.*, p.22

[234] Lee, 2012, p.119

there is actually no more life at the end of the corridor. As the narrator says, "it was clouding over even on the day when I was in the fort, whether because I did not really want to see what it had to show."[235] He is overwhelmed by this very reality of destruction and very reality of death which he describes as a physical existence:

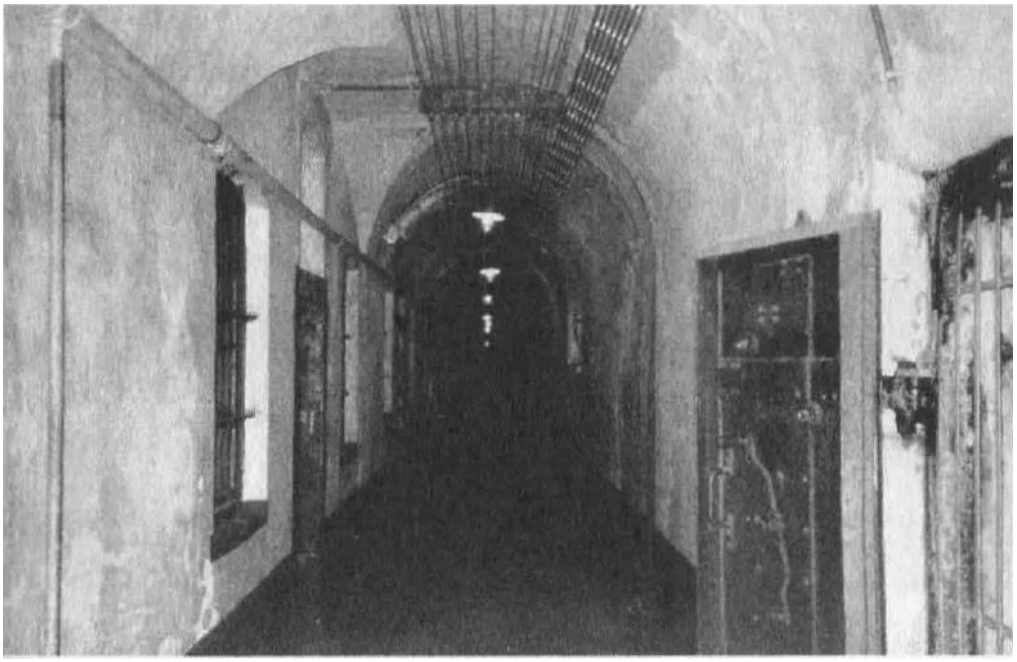

Figure 2.2.9: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.23

> I hardly dared to go on to the point where, at the end of a second long tunnel, a corridor not much more than the height of a man, and (as I think I remember) somewhat sloping, leads down to one of the casemates. This casemate, in which you sense immediately that there is a layer of concrete several meters thich overhead, is a narrow room with walls converging at a sharp angle on one side, rounded on the other, and with its floor at least a foot lower than

[235] Sebald, 2001, p.23

> the passage giving access to it, so that it is less like an oubliette than a pit.[236]

Associating this place with a butcher's shop, the narrator triggers the events that took place there. **(fig.2.2.10)** Yet, apart from the romantic view of death – mourning for the dead – the narrator, just like Austerlitz, points out a time perception in which "death" concept is the major part contributing to its formation. "I think how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with extinguished life" he says, "how the world is, as it were, draining itself, in that the history of countless places and objects which themselves have no power of memory is never heard, never described or passed on." Touching upon the significance of human figure shaping her/his very surrounding, the narrator also, in a Derridian fashion, relates the spectral quality of time to how it is measured through its capability of making associations, rather than its linear formation in a simple clock. He develops this idea just in Breendonk, as he recalls:

> Histories, for instance, like those of the straw mattresses which lay, shadow-like, on the stacked plank beds and which had become thinner and shorter because the chaff in the disintegrated over the years, shrunken, as if they were the mortal frames of those who lay there in that darkness.[237]

Just like the graveyards for bodies, these places and objects act as graveyards for souls, creating a type of afterlife that carries associations to it earlier phases, thus becoming completely spectral. Thus, the stronger the associations are, the more they are remembered within the course of time. Yet, most of them having faint relationships slowly disappear off the face of the earth, leaving their ambiguous traces within the physical existence of those spaces.

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[236] *Ibid*., p.25

[237] *Ibid*., p.24

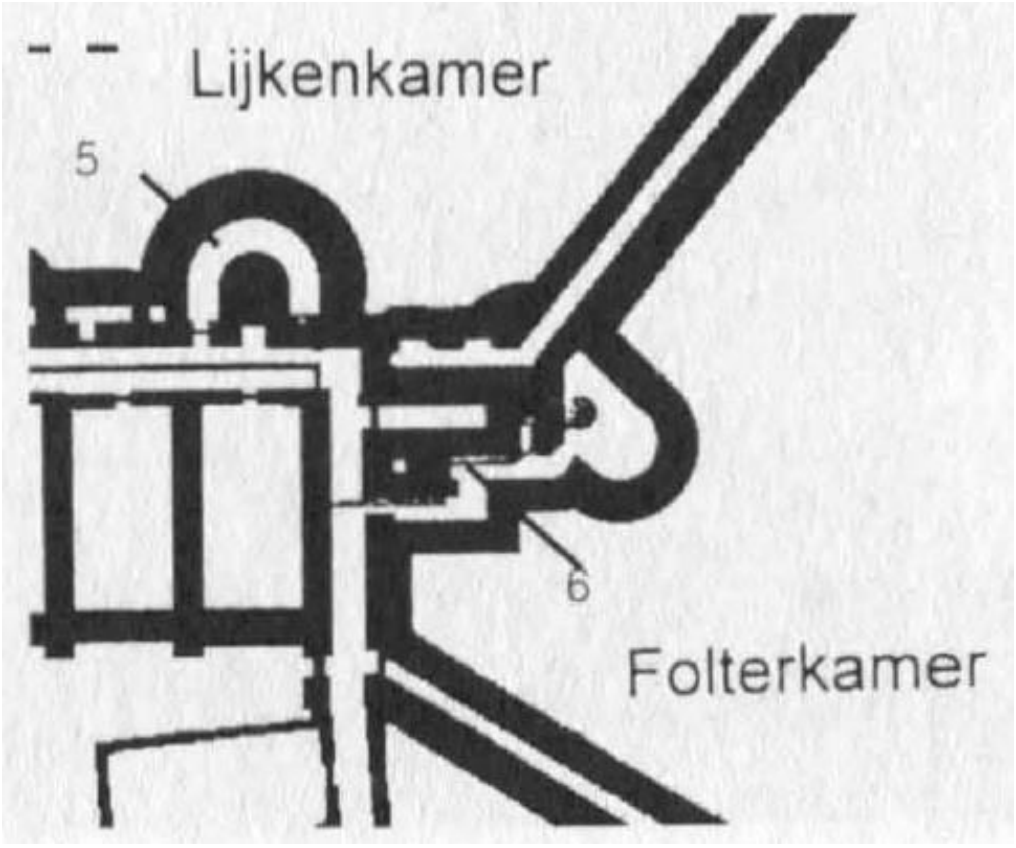

Figure 2.2.10: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.24

2.2.3.2 Terezin/Theresienstadt

> As one leaves the town, the appearance of which I can no longer remember, said Austerlitz, a wide panorama opens up to the north: afield, prison-green in color, in the foreground, behind it a petrochemicals plant half eaten away by rust, with clouds of smoke rising from its cooling towers and chimneys, as they must have done without cease for many long years. Further away I saw the conical Bohemian mountains surrounding the Bohusevice basin in a semicircle, their highest summits disappearing into the low sky this cold, gray morning I walked down the straight road, always looking ahead to see if the silhouette of the fortifications which could not be more than an hour and a half's walk away, was in sight yet. The idea I had formed in my mind was of a mighty complex rising high above the level country, but in fact Terezin lies

> so far down in the damp lowlands around the confluence of the Eger and the Elbe that, as I read later, there is nothing to be seen of the town, even from the hills around Leitmeritz or indeed from its immediate vicinity, except the chimney of the brewery and the church tower.[238] **(fig.2.2.11)**

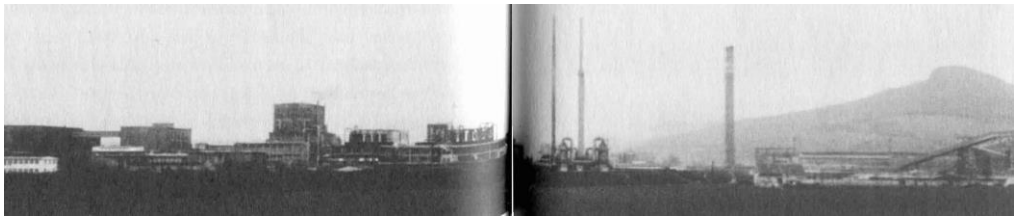

Figure 2.2.11: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.186-187

This is the first impression of Austerlitz, as he narrates it to the anonymous narrator, about the fortress within the urban fabric of the present settlement. He, after talking to Vera in the Sporkova decides to go to Terezin. He takes the railway from Holesovice to Lovosice, then sets off on foot to Terezin, since there was no taxi in sight, which seems to surprise him. With the contribution of the dark silhouette of the town – with the industrial settlement, its chimneys and pipes etc. – reproduced as a photograph at the bottom of the two full pages, Austerlitz mentions that "the brick walls built in the eighteenth century to a star-shaped ground plan, undoubtedly by serf labor, rise from a broad moat and stand not much higher than the outlying fields." So, being covered with all kinds of shrubs over the years, Terezin now looks like anything but a fortified town – half-hidden and sunk into the marshy ground of the floodplain.

The same situation is also current inside the fortified town. **(fig.2.2.12)** He hardly finds his way as there are many all kinds of wildly grown plants. Coming across the façades of the old garrison buildings **(fig.2.2.13)** he takes a

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[238] *Ibid*., pp.186-187

few steps and reaches the central square, where he notices that the emptiness is the most prominent feature. **(fig.2.2.14)** Knowing that Terezin had turned to a normal town again – as informed by Vera – its deserted character strikes him: "Although the sense of abandonment in this fortified town, laid out like Campanella's ideal sun state to a strictly geometrical grid, was extraordinarily oppressive, yet more so was the forbidding aspect of the silent façades." The only indication of life is the long rows of dustbins, having large numbers on them in red paint. **(fig.2.2.15)**

Figure 2.2.12: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.188

Figure 2.2.13: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.188

Figure 2.2.14: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.189

Figure 2.2.15: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.190

The spatial relationship between the buildings and streets makes the situation especially uncanny. The windows, gates and doorways of Terezin work totally opposite to their expected function meaning that they obstruct access, instead of letting through. Here, an allegorical duplication generated by means of literature shows itself again. It can be seen that these architectural elements not only restrain physical access to the buildings, but also prevent reaching the fragments of the past still existing there, and in the end, leave the very materiality of architecture as a silent witness of it. **(fig.2.2.16-17-18)**

Figure 2.2.16: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.191

Figure 2.2.17: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.192

Figure 2.2.18: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.193

On the other hand, one of the public places, in contrast to the private ones, gives access. Looking into the interior of one of the barracks – yet it is still not clear, whether Austerlitz is standing inside the building or just looking through the windows – he describes it as "filled from floor to ceiling with layer upon layer of the cobwebs woven by those ingenious creatures."[239] Another one, called *Antikos Bazar*, also puts Austerlitz's relationship with time and space into question. It is the only shop of any kind in Terezin apart from a tiny grocery store. Occupying the entire façade of one of the largest buildings, Antikos Bazar establishes a connection through its windows with many items on display. Austerlitz sees only a few displayed among the hundreds of different objects heaped up inside the shop. He looks hard to see through them, as if this attempt would reveal their family resemblances, yet they remain as enigmatic objects. **(fig.2.2.19)**

"What was the meaning of the festive white lace tablecloth hanging over the back of the ottoman and the armchair with its worn brocade cover?" asks Austerlitz, or "What secret lay behind the three brass mortars of different sizes, which had about them the suggestion of an oracular utterance, or the cut-glass bowls, ceramic vases, and earthenware jugs…"[240] He sees that they were all timeless at that moment of rescue, perpetuating but forever just occurring. Asking, as an intertextual reference to Newton, what might be the significance of the river never rising from any source, never flowing out into any sea but always back into itself, Austerlitz infers that one could never know for which reasons these objects – in general as well as the ones stranded in the Terezin bazaar – have outlived their former owners and survived the process of destruction.

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[239] *Ibid*., p.194

[240] *Ibid*., p.195

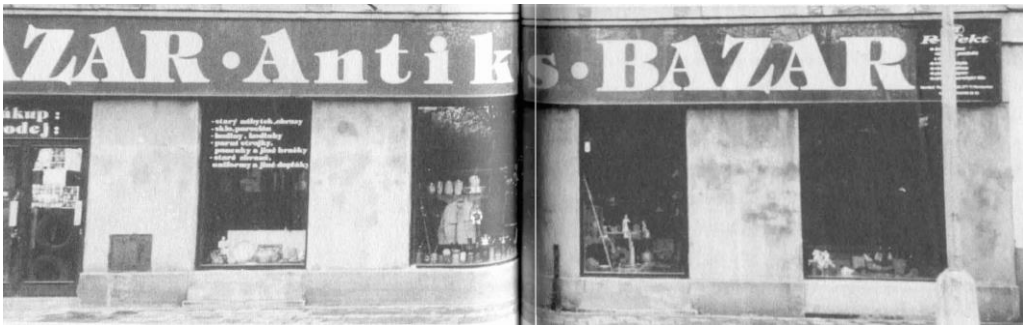

Figure 2.2.19: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.194-195

As the meanings are long lost within the course of time, Austerlitz carries on to the other parts of the town. While walking down on the streets, he suddenly finds himself on the northeast corner of the town square, just outside the so-called Ghetto Museum. Eventually getting overwhelmed by his encounter with what happened there during the German authority, Austerlitz says that whenever he thinks of the museum there, he sees:

> the framed ground plan of the star-shaped fortifications, color-washed in soft tones of gray-brown for Maria Theresia, her Imperial Highness in Vienna who had commissioned it, and fitting neatly into the folds of the surrounding terrain, the model of a world made by reason and regulated in all conceivable respects.[241]

However, there are other sides to this story. Touching upon its pre-life, Austerlitz also creates a framework that covers how this settlement worked in the 19th century. Without retracing further back, he says:

> This impregnable fortress has never been besieged, not even by the Prussians in 1866, but throughout the nineteenth century – if one disregards the fact that a considerable number of political prisoners of the Habsburg empire pined away in the casemates of one of its outworks – remained a quite garrison for two or three regiments and some two thousand civilians throughout the nineteenth century,

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[241] *Ibid*., p.199

> somewhat out of the way, a town with yellow painted walls, galleried courtyards, well-clipped trees, bakeries, beerhouses, casinos, soldiers' quarters, armories, bandstand concerts, occasional forays for the purpose of military maneuvers, officers' wives who were bored to death, and service regulations which, it was believed, would never change for all eternity.[242]

However, in the 1940s, this situation turns into something that changed all the functions of the spaces, ascribing new meanings to them, within the political context of the time. Thus the whole fortress, exceeding its function of defending the city against the enemy forces – a place that safe inside – shifts in its purpose and becomes a place of pain and death – just dangerous in itself – in order to protect the life outside the walls from the one inside, where Austerlitz indicates that "in the middle of December 1942, and thus at the very time when Agata came to Terezin, some sixty thousand people were shut up together in the ghetto, a built-up area of one square kilometer at the most."[243] Seeing all the remnants of this period, and studying all the documents in a very detailed way, Austerlitz reanimates all the lives in the end. **(fig.2.2.20)** He says:

> It suddenly seemed to me, with the greatest clarity, that they had never been taken away after all, but were still living crammed into those buildings and basements and attics, as if they were incessantly going up and down the stairs, looking out of the windows, moving in vast numbers through the streets and alleys, and even, a silent assembly, filling the entire space occupied by the air, hatched with gray as it was by the fine rain.[244]

It is a rather fictitious picture of the inhabitants of this space, revealing the possibilities of history on how they engaged with their surrounding. Yet, this does not include only Austerlitz's fictitious mother with the people sharing the

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[242] *Ibid*., pp.199-200

[243] W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.200

[244] *Ibid.*

same fate, through the neutral narrative of the environment. It also shows the lives of the 19th century inhabitants and even of the ones before them, although they are not mentioned. This is, all in all, an interlocked spatial activity – changing relationships with the same space – as the different inhabitants from different periods all left their imprints in these public and private spaces within the intersections of different so-called "planes" or layers of history.

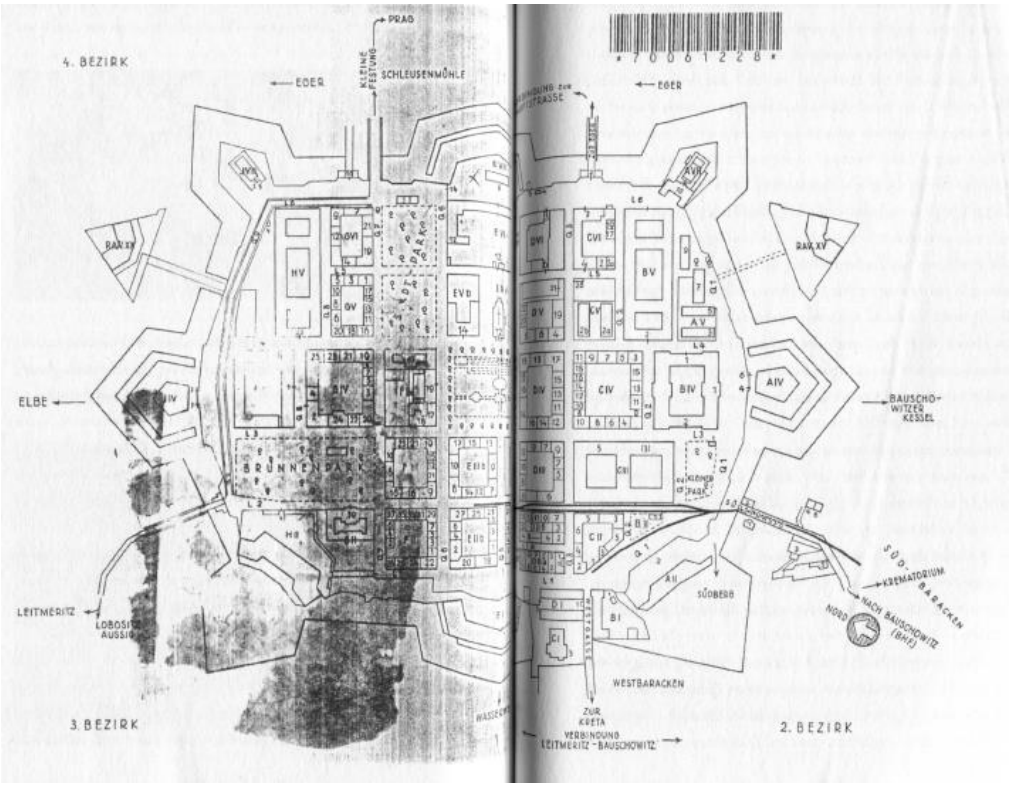

Figure 2.2.20: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.234-235

Later on, being coincidently informed about H.G. Adler's book, written between 1945 and 1947, partly in Prague and partly in London, Austerlitz becomes more acquainted with the development and internal organization of the Theresienstadt ghetto. The book provides a blend of facts that cannot be imagined only by experiencing the town. In that sense, Sebald introduces a

type of multiple perspectives in understanding the built environment with its different contexts. Deciphering the meanings of such terms and concepts as:

-"Barackenbestandteillager"
- "Bagatellreparaturwerkstatte"
- "Zusatzkosten-berechnungsschein"
- "Menagetransportkolonnen"
- "Küchenbeschwerdeorgane"

Austerlitz grasps the almost futuristic deformation of social life in the ghetto system, in which there is something incomprehensible and unreal though Adler describes them all with an objective actuality. These sixty thousands of people – "industrialists and manufacturers, lawyers and doctors, rabbis and university professors, singers and composers, bank managers, businessmen, shorthand typists, housewives, farmers, labourers and millionaires, people from Prague and the rest of the Protectorate, from Slovakia, from Denmark and Holland, from Vienna and Munich, Cologne and Berlin, from the Palatinate, from Lower Franconia and Westphalia"[245] – had to exist within about two square meters of space, a situation that causes all this incomprehensibility.

> …and all of them, in so far as they were in any condition to do so or until they were loaded into trucks and sent on east, obliged to work entirely without remuneration in one of the primitive factories set up, with a view to generating actual profit, by the External Trade Section, assigned to the bandage-weaving workshop, to the handbag and satchel assembly line, the production of horn buttons and other haberdashery items, the manufacturing of wooden soles for footwear and of cowhide galoshes; to the charcoal yard, the making of such board games as Nine Men's Morris and Catch the Hat, the splitting of mica, the shearing of rabbit fur, the bottling of ink dust, or the silkworm-breeding station run under the aegis of the SS; or, alternatively, employed in one of

[245] *Ibid*., p.236

the operations serving the ghetto's internal economy, in the clothing store, for instance, in one of the preciint mending and darning rooms, the shredding section, the rag depot, the book reception and sorting unit, the kitchen brigade, the potato-pleeling platoon, the bone-crushing mill, the glue-boiling plant, or the mattress department, as medical and nursing auxiliaries, in the disinfestation and rodent control service, the floor space allocation office, the central registration bureau, the self-administration housed in barrack block BV, known as *The Castle*, or in the transport of goods maintained within the walls of the fortress by means of a medley of carts of every conceivable kind and four dozen ancient hearses brought from the now defunct Jewish communities in the Bohemian countryside to Terezin, where they moved along the crowded streets with two men harnessed between the shafts and four to eight pushing or putting their weight against the spokes of the wheels of these oddly swaying conveyances, which were covered by ulcerations of peeling black varnish and from which, before long, the rickety superstructures, high-built coach boxes, and silver-bronzed canopies resting on turned columns had been roughly sawn away, so that the lower parts, on the sides of which rows of letters and numbers were coarsely painted in lime-wash, scarcely betrayed their former function, a function, said Austerlitz, for which they were still frequently employed even now, since much of the load carted round Theresienstadt every day was made up by the dead, of whom there were always a great many because the high population density and poor diet rendered it impossible for the course of such infectious diseases as scarlet fever, enteritis, diphtheria, jaundice, and tuberculosis to be stemmed, and because the average age or those brought from all regions of the German Reich to the ghetto was over sventy, and these people, who before they were sent away had been led to believe some tale about a pleasant resort in Bohemia called Theresienbad, with beautiful gardens, promenades, boardinghouses, and villas, and many of whom had been persuaded or forced to sign contracts, so called *Heimeinkaufsvertrage*, said Austerlitz, offering them, against deposits of up to eighty thousand Reichsmarks, the right of residence in what was described to them as a most salubrious place, these people, Austerlitz continued, had come to Theresienstadt, completely misled by the illusions implanted in their minds, carrying in their luggage all manner of personal items and mementoes which could be of no conceivable use in the life that awaited them in the ghetto, often arriving already ravaged in body and spirit, no longer, in their right minds,

delirious, frequently unable to remember their own names, surviving the procedure of being sluiced in, as it was termed, either not at all or only by a few days, in which latter case, on account of the extreme psychopathic personality changes which they had undergone and which generally resulted in a kind of infantilism divorcing them from reality and entailing an almost total loss of the ability to speak and act, they were immediately sectioned in the casemate of the Cavalier Barracks, which served as a psychiatric ward and where they usually perished within a week under the dreadful conditions prevailing there, so that although there was no shortage of doctors and surgeons in Theresienstadt who cared for their fellow prisoners as well as they could, and in spite of the steam disinfection with lice, the number of the dead – entirely in line, said Austerlitz, with the intentions of the masters of the ghetto – rose to well above twenty thousand in the ten months between August 1942 and May 1943 alone, as a result of which the joiner's workshop in the former riding school could no longer make enough deal coffins, there were sometimes more than five hundred dead bodies stacked in layers on top of each other in the central morgue in the casemate by the gateway to the Bohusevice road, and four naphtha-fired incinerators of the crematorium, kept going day and night in cycles in forty minutes at a time, were stretched to the utmost limits of their capacity, said Austerlitz, and this comprehensive system of internment and forced labor which, in Theresienstadt as elsewhere, was ultimately directed, so he continued, solely at the extinction of life and was built on an organizational plan regulating all functions and responsibilities, as Adler's reconstruction shows, with a crazed administrative zeal – from the use of whole troops of workers in building branch railway line from Bohusevice to the fort, to the one man whose job it was to keep the clock mechanism in the closed Catholic church in order – this system had to be constantly supervised and statistically accounted for, particularly with respect to the total number of inmates of the ghetto, an uncommonly time-consuming business going far beyond civilian requirements when you remember that new transports were arriving all the time, and people were regulary weeded out to be sent elsewhere with their files marked *R.n.e* for *Rückkehr nicht erwünscht*, Return Not Desired, a purpose for which the SS men responsible, who regarded numerical accuracy as one of their highest principles, had a census taken several times, on one occasion, if I remember correctly, said Austerlitz, on 10 November 1943 outside the gates in the open fields of the Bohusevice basin, when the entire population of the ghetto –

children, old people, and any of the sick at all able to walk not excepted – was marched out after assembling in the barracks yards at dawn to be drawn up in block formation behind numbered wooden boards, and there, through the whole of this cold and damp day, as the fog drifted over the fields, they were forced to wait, guarded by armed police, and not permitted to step out of line even for a minute, for the SS men to arrive, as they eventually did on their motorbikes at three o'clock, to carry out the count of heads and then repeat it twice before they could feel convinced that the final result, including those few still within the walls, did in fact tally with the expected number of forty thousand one hundred and forty-five, whereupon they rode away again in some haste, entirely forgetting to give any order for the inmates' return, so that thi great crowd of many thousands stood out in the Bohusevice basin on that gray tenth of November drenched to the skin and increasingly distressed until well after dark, bowed and swaying like reeds in the showers that now swept over the countryside, before finally, driven to it by a wave of panic, they poured back into the town from which most of them had never emerged except for this one time since their transfer to Theresienstadt, where soon after the beginning of the new year, said Austerlitz, what was described as a *Verschönerungsaktion* or general improvement campaign was undertaken, with an eye to the imminent visit in the early summer of 1944 of a Red Cross commission, an event regarded by those authorities of the Reich responsible as a good opportunity to dissimulate the true nature of their deportation policy, and consequently it was decided to organize the ghetto inmates under the command of the SS for the purpose of a vast cleaning-up program: pathways and a grove with a columbarium were laid out, park benches and signposts were set up, the latter adorned in the German fashion with jolly carvings and floral decoration, over a thousand rosebushes were planted, a children's nursery and creche or *Kriechlingskrippe*, as it was termed, said Austerlitz, in one of those perverse formulations, were adorned with pretty fairy-tale friezes and equipped with sandboxes, paddling pools, and merry-go-rounds, whilst the former OREL cinema, which until now had served as a dumping ground for the oldest inmates of the ghetto and where a huge chandelier still hung from the ceiling in the dark space inside, was converted within a few weeks into a concert hall and theater, and elsewhere shops stocked with goods from the SS storehouses were opened for the sale of food and household utensils, ladies' and gentlemen's clothing, shoes, underwear, travel requisites, and suitcases; there were also convalescent home, a

chapel, a lending library, a gymnasium, a post office, a bank where the manager's office was furnished with a sort of field marshal's desk and a suite of easy chairs, not to mention a coffeehouse with sun umbrellas and folding chairs outside it to suggest the agreeable atmosphere of a resort inviting all passersby to linger for a while, and indeed there was no end to the improvements and embellishments, with much sawing, hammering, and painting until the time of the visit itself approached and Theresienstadt, after another seven and a half thousand of the less presentable inmates had been sent east amidst all this busy activity, to thin out the population, so to speak, became a Potemkin village or sham Eldorado which may have dazzled even some of the inhabitants them elves and where, when the appointed day came, the commission of two Danes and one Swiss official, having been guided, in conformity with a precise plan and a timetable drawn up by the Kommandant's office, through the streets and over the spotless pavements, scrubbed with soap early that morning, could see for themselves the friendly, happy folk who had been spared the horrors of war and were looking out of the windows, could see how smartly they were all dressed, how well the few sick people were cared for, how they were given proper meals served on plates, how the bread ration was handed out by people in white drill gloves, how posters advertising sporting events, cabarets, theatrical performances, and concerts were being put up on every corner and how, when the day's work was over, the residents of the town flocked out in their thousands on the ramparts and bastions to take the air, almost as if they were passengers enjoying an evening stroll on the deck of an oceangoing teamer, a most reassuring spectacle, all things considered, which the Germans, whether for propaganda purposes or in order to justify their actions and conduct to themselves, thought fit after the end of the Red Cross visit to record in a film, which Adler tells us, said Austerlitz, was given a sound track of Jewish folk music in March 1945, when a considerable number of the people who had appeared in it were no longer alive, and a copy of which, again according to Adler, had apparently turned up in the British-occupied zone after the war, although he, Adler himself, said Austerlitz, never saw it, and thought it was now lost without trace.[246]

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[246] *Ibid*., pp.236-244

This, extraordinary narrative, formed as a single sentence of more than 1200 words in several pages, captures the reader as if there was no escape from reading it. As Richard Bales points out, it is due to Sebald's text's self-referentiality where the semantic content dictates syntactic form. The sentence meanders, digresses and parenthesizes to such an extent that any meaningful direction it initially possessed is lost sight as the Nazi regulations go on endlessly. Bales also adds that in writing such a sentence which seemingly lacks grammatical construction, Sebald achieves a Proustian effect: "whether it be semantically or syntactically, these are sentences from which there is no escape."[247] Without quotation marks, Sebald integrates this documentary with Austerlitz's speech, as if it was all his imagination after the visit to Ghetto Museum. However, with its factuality, Theresienstadt, which is considered to be "the most radical facet of the economic, political and symbolic order of post-Enlightenment modernity"[248] or "the model of a world made by reason and regulated in all conceivable respects"[249] reveals itself as a place which became the place of death and suffering. The unreal nature of Theresienstadt as a whole, adds Martin Modlinger, represents the necessary silence within the unspeakability of the Holocaust, of the horrible events that cannot be put in proper words any more and that result in the detachment of language from the world it once described.[250]

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[247] Richard Bales, "Homeland and Displacement: The Status of the Text in Sebald and Proust", *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, 72.1 (2009), p.470

[248] Eshel, 2003, p.86

[249] Sebald, 2001, p.199

[250] Modlinger, 2012, p.359

2.2.4 Other Buildings

Apart from railway network that connects and crumbles all the associations within spaces, also many public and domestic buildings also find their way in the story as connecting parts within the context of Nazi period. However, it should again be noted that although Austerlitz finds his traces in those places, in the broader context, these spaces, representing different scales, are used as case studies to discuss a variety of concepts of time and space, in relation both to modernity, in general, and their life stories and/histories in particular. In the end, these repositories become liberated from their repressed time course.

For example, the case of Royal Observatory in Greenwich, which appears in the fifth encounter, in 1996, constitutes a very prominent place in the discourse of time. The details of the place and how it is thematized in the narrative will be discussed in the third chapter, under *Travel* section, yet here, it can be easily seen that the time concept is discussed not only through railways in an urban scale, but also through a singular structure of science. In addition to the mighty clock in the Antwerp Centraal Station, here in the Royal Observatory, Austerlitz develops his idea further and asks "Why does time stand eternally still and motionless in one place, and rush headlong by in another?" He actually thinks that time has been a nonconcurrent issue over the centuries and the millennia. Time, which is the most artificial of all humankind's inventions, operates in human life not more than the weather until recent times. Yet it is this power that adds an unquantifiable dimension which disregards linear regularity. According to him, time is marked by episodes of congestion and irruption – against time concept of Newton – recurs in ever-changing form and evolves in no one knows what direction by progressing constantly forward but rather moving in eddies. "Even in a metropolis ruled by time like London," as Austerlitz says:

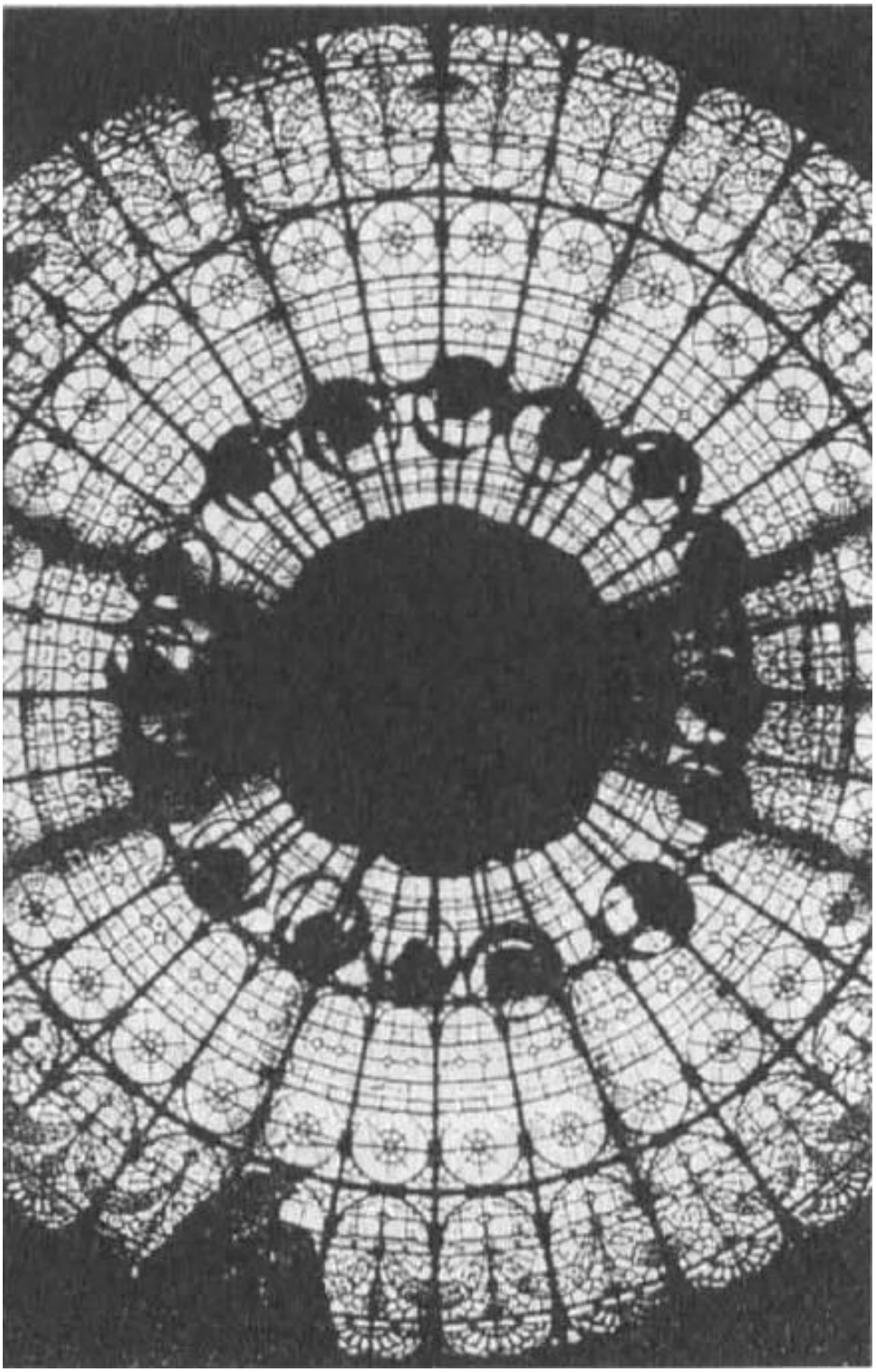

Figure 2.2.21: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.42

> …it is still possible to be outside time, a state of affairs which until recently was almost as common in backward and forgotten areas of our own country as it used to be in the undiscovered continents overseas. The dead are outside time, the dying and all the sick at home or in hospitals, and they are not the only ones, for a certain degree of personal misfortune is enough to cut us off from the past and the future.[251]

Therefore, developing a resistance against the clock – ridiculous, a thoroughly mendacious object – due to his disbelief in the power of time, Austerlitz relies on the thought that:

> … time will not pass away, has not passed away, that I can turn back and go behind it, and there I shall find everything as it once was, or more precisely I shall find that all moments of time have co-existed simultaneously, in which case none of what history tells to do so at the moment when we think of them, although that, of course, opens up the bleak prospect of everlasting misery and neverending anguish.[252]

Therefore, as the narrator himself notices, this *back-and-forth* way of thinking of Austerlitz reveals that, there are no beginnings or no endings in Austerlitz's own life which cause transience of the past or the present in the form of passing in layers. Moreover, this concept, as discussed in *Introduction* is also very prominent in the construction of the whole narrative where the reader finds himself/herself leaped at different phases of events and buildings thereby becoming witnesses to their forgotten afterlives.

2.2.4.1 Palace of Justice in Brussels

Early in the text, saying that he came upon Austerlitz by chance on the old Gallows Hills in Brussels **(fig.2.2.22)** the reader faces the anonymous

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[251] *Ibid*., p.101

[252] *Ibid.*

narrator's deliverance of Austerlitz's briefing on the famous Palace of Justice, which began to be built 1866 in the reign of Leopold I. According to Austerlitz, says the narrator, the building is the largest accumulation of stone blocks anywhere in Europe and continues:

> The building of this singular architectural monstrosity, on which Austerlitz was planning to write a study at the time, began in the 1880s at the urging of the bourgeoisie of Brussels, over-hastily and before the details of the grandiose scheme submitted by a certain Joseph Poelaert had been properly worked out, as a result of which, said Austerlitz, this huge pile of over seven hundred thousand cubic meters contains corridors and stairways leading nowhere, and doorless rooms and halls where no one would ever set foot, empty spaces surrounded by walls and representing the innermost secret of all sanctioned authority.[253]

Here, Austerlitz not only gives information about the building – which is based on the article *Der Justizpalast von Brüssel – ein heraldischer Unfall* by Benoit Peeters- but also criticizes the architecture of the period by showing the deployment of power through buildings which even surpasses their functional purposes. It is also evident in the following sentences where Austerlitz says that he:

> had wandered for hours through this mountain range of stone, through forests of columns, past colossal statues, upstairs and downstairs, and no one ever asked him what he wanted. During these wanderings, feeling tired or wishing to get his bearings from the sky, he had stopped at one of the windows set deep in the walls to look out over the leaden gray roofs of the palace, crammed together like pack ice, and down into ravines and shaft-like interior courtyards never penetrated by any ray of light. He had gone on and on down the corridors, said Austerlitz, sometimes turning left and then right again, then walking straight ahead and passing through many tall doorways, and once or twice he had climbed

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[253] *Ibid*., p.29

flights of creaking wooden stairs which gave the impression of being temporary structures, branching off from the main corridors here and there and leading half a story up or down, only to end in dark cul-de-sacs with roll-top cupboards, lecterns, writing desks, office chairs, and other items of furniture stacked up at the end of them, as if someone had been obliged to hold out there in a state of siege.[254]

Figure 2.2.22: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.29

[254] *Ibid*., p.30

Both “State of siege” and “innermost secret of all sanctioned authority” which carry the influences of both Kafka and Foucault, exemplify the relationship between the functioning of sovereign power and subjectivity in modernity.[255] This leads to a catastrophe – an industrial genocide – in Alexender Verdolini’s words, where architectural overgrowth results in hermetic spaces – empty rooms that have been cut off from the flow of time.[256] Yet interestingly, it also triggers the debate of “afterlife” if it is connected to Verdolini’s suggestion that these spaces serve as crypts, memorials or sanctuaries. As the passage continues, the narrator quotes one of the apocryphal stories that Austerlitz told him. “He had even heard, said Austerlitz,” says the narrator:

> of people who, over the years, had managed to start up a small business in one or other of the empty room and remote corridors of that great warren: a tobacconist's, a bookie's, a bar, and it was rumored, Austerlitz added, that a man called Achterbos had once turned a gentlemen's lavatory down in the basement into a public convenience for, among others, passersby in the street, installing himself at the entrance with a small table and a plate to take the money, and that later, when he engaged an assistant who was handy with a comb and a pair of scissors, it was a barber's shop for a while.

Considering these dual purposes, it also can be suggested that apart from the context of the building or the intention of its architect, Austerlitz touches upon the idea that one of the most important parameters in shaping the Palace of Justice’s social meaning is also its transformation through time by human activities that decomposes its monstrous scale to human scale by means of functional adaptations which although remain disregarded, break the static meaning of the building over time.

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[255] Lee, 2012, p.144

[256] Verdolini, 2013, p.638

2.2.4.2 State Archives in Prague

Located in Karmelitska, in the Lesser Quarter, Prague State Archive is one of the places where Austerlitz pursues his search to find his family's traces. Remarkably, the archive is located in a very peculiar building again characterized by the notion of being outside time. Austerlitz starts his narration of the building by animating how it is experienced: "You go in through a narrow doorway let into the main portal, and find yourself first in a dim barrel-vaulted entrance." Yet what matters here is not only the physicality of the building but also the remembrance of "the coaches and carriages which used to drive into the inner courtyard."[257] A frozen image from its history again is associated with physical features – a type of blending that gathers fact with memory even with fiction – where the dimensions of the courtyard is revealed to give a concrete picture of it:

> This courtyard measures some twenty by fifty meters, is roofed by a glazed dome, and on three stories has galleries running round it, giving access to the rooms containing the archives where the windows look out on the street. The entire building, from the outside more like a mansion house than anything else, therefore consists of four wings, each not much more than three meters deep, set around the courtyard in an almost Illusionist manner and without any corridors or passages in them.[258] **(fig.2.2.23)**

He criticizes the building as an example of "prison architecture of the bourgeois epoch" in which the most useful layout for the penal system is a courtyard – circular or rectangular – with wings of cells formed around it and catwalk system – running along the interior – that vertically connects them all. "And it was not just of a prison that the archives building in the Karmelitska

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[257] Sebald, 2001, p.143

[258] *Ibid.*, pp.143-144

reminded me" continues Austerlitz, "it also suggested a monastery, a riding school, an opera house, and a lunatic asylum."[259]

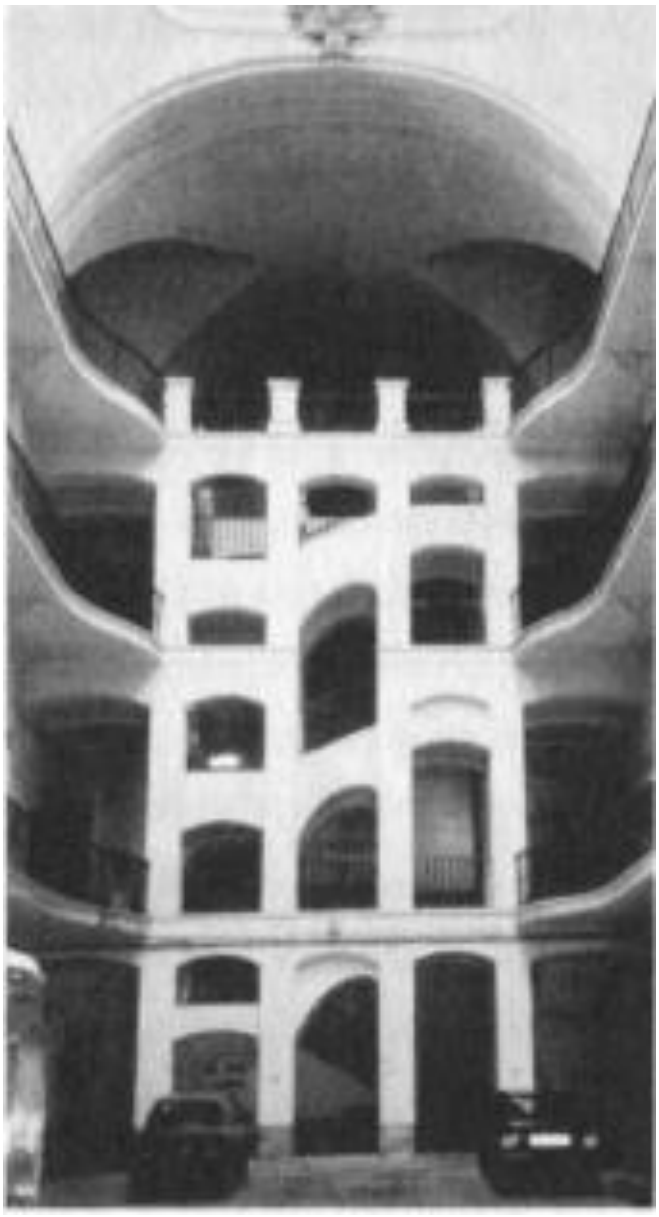

Figure 2.2.23: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.144

[259] *Ibid*., p.144

This thought is prompted by the dome itself. **(fig.2.2.24)** Without a direct mention of the dome, Austerlitz just says "I looked at the twilight coming in from above" and lets the reader complete the act of looking above by looking at the photograph. A very high-contrast photograph that shows octagonal dome of glass and iron from the inside also indicates the human scale from far above due to its height. However, since it is not possible to grasp any further details, it rather demonstrates a shape – a reminder – in the narrative triggering the further thoughts of Austerlitz: "… and thought that on the rows of galleries I saw a dense crowd of people, some of them waving hats or handkerchiefs, as passengers on board a steamer used to do when it put out to sea."[260]

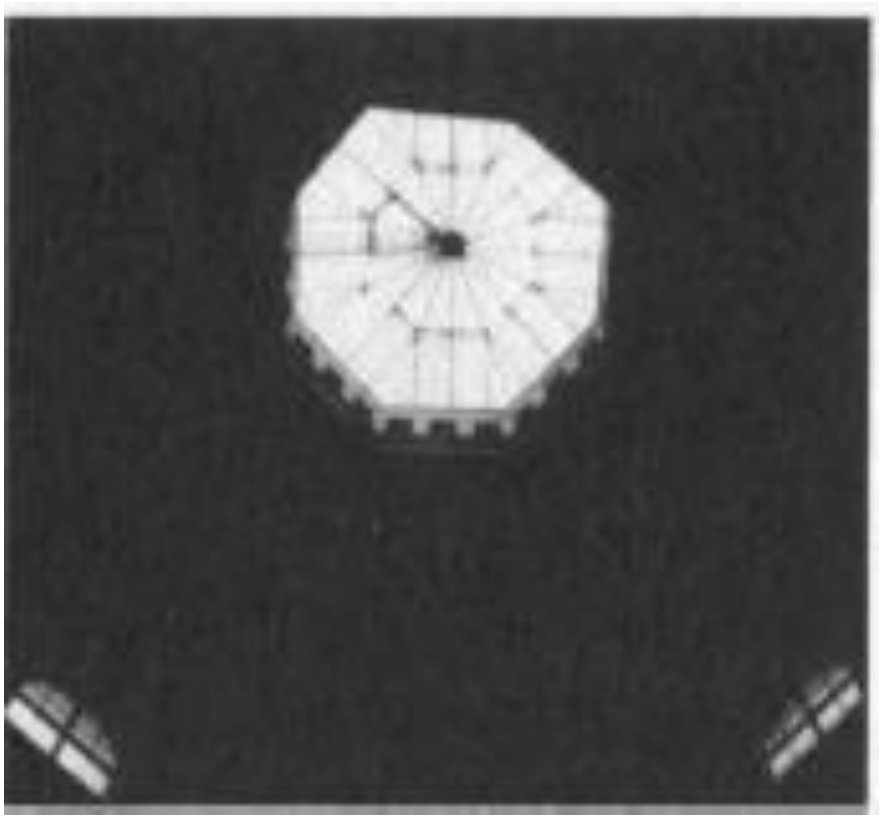

Figure 2.2.24: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.145

[260] *Ibid.*, p.145

Relating it directly to railway stations, Austerlitz probably feels that his root is also somewhere there, which later results in his emotional suffering, as he goes to see one of the officials of the archive – Tereza Abrosova. Following their conversation – Austerlitz's effort to put his purpose together– in the end, in this graveyard of documents, ghostly presence of his mother is revealed with a physical name and address: "Agata Austerlitzova, opera singer, Sparkova, Number 12."

2.2.4.3 Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris

Towards the end of the book, Austerlitz's journey takes another direction which leads him to the nearly half-deserted area between the tracks of the Gare d'Austerlitz and the Quai d'Austerlitz on the left bank of the Seine. It is a journey through the abandoned dockyards, boarded-up warehouses, goods depots, custom halls and a few garages and car repair shops which seems to have a pretty detailed but irrelevant narrative structure within the framework of Austerlitz' attempt to find his long lost history. Yet, this long section that lasts nearly for twenty pages is a critical juncture that both reveals the hidden story behind the name of the protagonist and a lost history of the area in relation to both modern architecture and the course of the Holocaust introducing Bibliothèque Nationale as the key element.

With a mention of the Bastiani Traveling Circus, set in the area, Austerlitz again reminds us of the tough life of the exotic animals suspended from their homeland. Not only this repetition but also the exotic melody played by the artists in the circus, Austerlitz begins to give clues about the character of the area which is impossible to grasp for the casual reader. After telling the narrator that "I cannot say what it was that the five circus performers played that Saturday afternoon in the circus tent beyond the gare d'Austerlitz for their tiny audience drawn from heaven knows where", he continues: "but it seemed

to me, as if the music came from somewhere very distant, from the East, I thought, from the Caucasus or Turkey."[261] Feeling pain and happiness at the same time with a hazy state of mind, back then, Austerlitz takes up this story at their next meeting at the Brasserie Le Havane and connects it directly to the new Bibliothèque Nationale, which as we learn from Austerlitz, stands on the area of the circus which became increasingly dilapidated. The building, named after the French President – François Mitterrand – has actually two functions. First, it is an architectural monument that glorifies the victory of the president and second, it is a precise architectural expression of the sterile type of repository of knowledge, probably the most "pharaonic" one in Western Europe.[262] As such, while the building runs parallel to the bizarre Palace of Justice in Brussells as well as Antwerp Centraal Station, Breendonk and Theresienstadt, it is in complete contrast to the circus, the paper mill, and the old library when their primitive and modest characteristics are taken into consideration. They all share the feature of being peaceful and well-functioning.

Thus, regarding the old library, Austerlitz mentions that once the books have been taken off the shelves, there appears a deserted aura in the domed hall, which casted previously a soothing, pleasant light from its green porcelain lampshades. According to him, "the readers, who once sat at the desks numbered with little enamel plates, in close contact with their neighbors and silent harmony with those who had gone before them" might have vanished

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[261] *Ibid*., p.274

[262] James L. Cowan, "W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* and the Great Library: History, Fiction, Memory Part II", *Monatshefte*, 102.2 (2010), p.195

from the earth and probably many of the old readers do not go to the new library.[263] **(fig.2.2.25)**

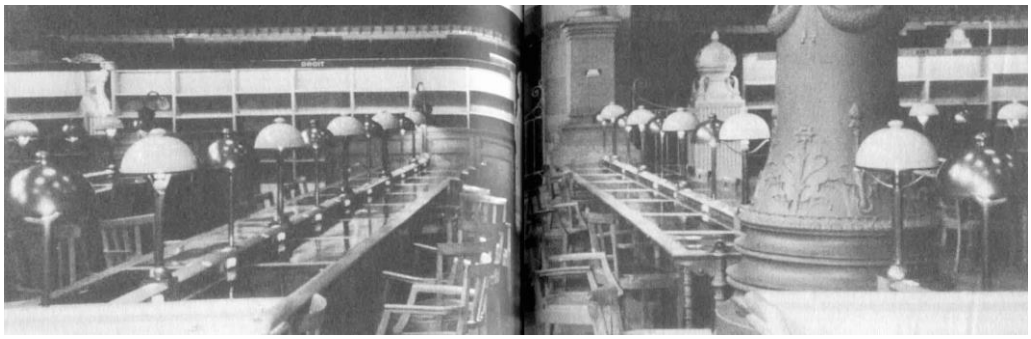

Figure 2.2.25: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.276-277

In a negative tone, Austerlitz describes that to be able to reach the new library, one needs to travel through a desolate no-man's-land in one of those "robot-driven Metro trains steered by a ghostly voice" or catch a bus in the place Valhubert and then walk along the wind-swept riverbank towards the hideous, outsize building. As he continues, the monumental dimensions of the building, which apparently have to serve to perpetuate the memory of the president, is overwhelming both on the exterior and in the interior by creating an unwelcoming aura in its inhuman scale, and by ignoring the requirements of any true reader. In relation to this architectural criticism, Austerlitz continues to draw the physical outline of the building and says:

> If you approach the new Bibliotheque Nationale from the place Valhubert, you find yourself at the foot of a flight of steps which, made out of countless grooved hardwood boards and measuring three hundred by a hundred and fifty meters, surrounds the entire complex on the two sides facing the street like the lower story of a ziggurat. Once you have climbed the steps, at least four dozen in

[263] Sebald, 2001, p.275

> number and as closely set as they are steep, a venture not entirely without its dangers even for younger visitors. **(fig.2.2.26)**

So between the four corner towers of the library, this is an area of about nine football pitches, surrounded by the grooved wood covered steps.[264]

As Ann Pearson notes, while symbolizing national culture, the library stands as an eraser of the evidence of one of that culture's most horrific episodes: the Vichy government's active complicity in the rounding-up and deportation of Jews.[265] Being a remarkable example of history and counter-history, the New Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and its archives document the official past, yet it is located on the ground of the former Galeries d'Austerlitz, which as a part of the Drancy Camp, was used to store the goods stolen from the deported Jews in its basement. Just like coexistence of life and death, says Catalina Botez, those cultural institutions go beyond their role as preservers of cultural memory and stand as testimony to oppression, pain and genocide.[266] In the end, those types of monumental buildings become monstrous due not only to their physical appearance but also to their social oppressiveness. In terms of afterlives of buildings, this is crucial. Because going one step further of Patricia Morton's re-conceptualizing of Benjamin, what Sebald does here is to force his reader to look at their before-lives as well through the multiple layers of history and to trace their physical and social functions which are all to be found in another. So it becomes a kind of "the dialectic of enlightenment at work,"[267]

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[264] *Ibid*., pp.276-277

[265] Pearson, 2008, p.275

[266] Botez, 2011, p.153

[267] Cowan, 2010, p.195

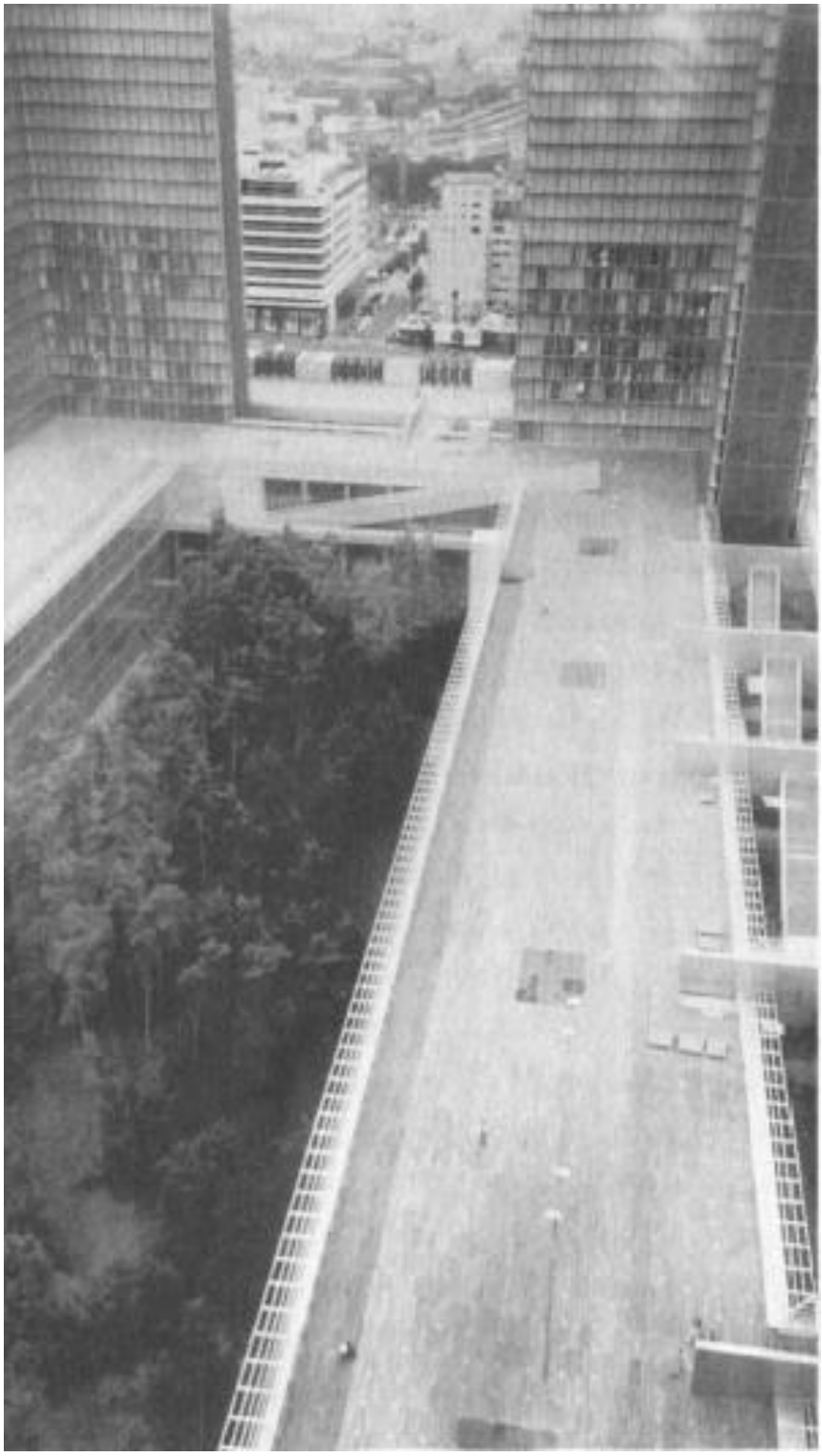

Figure 2.2.26: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.279

in James L. Cowan's words. Therefore, the Great Library – a temple of deliberate forgetting – is an archive that works against itself, causing eradication of memory in a Derridian fashion. Therefore, in such places, history – whether personal or collective – cannot be studied, Instead, he has to go to Terezin.[268]

Another key concept that creates a sort of ground zero in the text is the origin of the name Austerlitz. To quote James Chandler, the Gare d'Austerlitz supplies beginnings, middles and ends for the last work of Sebald:

> It is the place where the quest for his father effectively terminates, in spite of his unrelenting pursuit." he says, "Since his parental name proves to be Aychenwald and since he himself passed through this station en route to Wales in 1939, we are invited to think of this place as the source of his name.[269]

Adding several symbolic dimensions to the Sebald's protagonist, the name reveals itself not as the continuation of the Napoleon's victory in Battle of Austerlitz as depicted in the early pages of the book, but rather as an implication of Galeries d'Austerlitz – a camp that the imaginary figure, Lemoine, gives a full mention. As James L. Cowan underlines, Galeries d'Austerlitz (which is "Galeries Austerlitz" in reality) is the internment camp that connects the protagonist's name directly to the Shoah with a similarity to "Auschwitz", while it also reminds the reader of its extermination process which is a part of suppressed memory, as in the case of Austerlitz's own memory. Yet in a larger scale of interwoven textuality, what Sebald achieves is to illuminate the turning point for European civilization's decline into mechanistic inhumanity. Because the French were associated with betrayal in the case of Lager Austerlitz – as the French police took part in the arrests and

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[268] Modlinger, 2012, p.352

[269] Chandler, 2003, p.255

deportations of Jews – although they were considered to have a glorious past – in relation to the Battle.[270]

Thus blending facts into fiction, Sebald's treatment of the Great Library creates multiple perspectives by putting authenticity and verification into question, as well as by interrupting the timeline of "the" history. Moreover, it also reveals how a work of literature can intervene in architectural history and historical memory. The most fictitious character in the book yet is the librarian, Lemoine who gives a detailed account of the historical background of the area where the library stands. However, as Cowan notes, Lemoine's historical narrative requires a curious and sceptical reader to engage in research because of its "fascinating mixture of fact and fictional invention."[271] This treatment not only puts the fixed meanings into question, but also seems to be a further attempt of Sebald that triggers the reader by raising many questions rather than finding the answers, which brings a wider perspective to historical thinking.

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[270] Cowan, 2010, p.198

[271] *Ibid*., p.60

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURE / PHOTOGRAPHY / HISTORY II: DOCUMENT

3.1 Image-Text

3.1.1 Post-Modern Hybridity

It is in the 1960s and 1970s that political and moral ideas about literary documentarism became prominent in Germany.[272] Subsequently, literary authors' treatment of image and word together created a hallmark in the aesthetic hybrity of post-modern art. This aesthetic concept is also adopted by Sebald, who sees photographic representation as an extension of the literary and historical discourses in all of his works.[273] However, Sebald is interested not only in the aesthetic quality of visual discourses, but also in the relationship of memory and the past through photographic reproductions, a notion which runs parallel to Marianne Hirsh's concept of "post-memory". For Hirsh, post-memory is different from memory by means of generational distance. It is also different from history by deep personal connection. As J.J. Long quotes from her, it is a powerful and very particular form of memory due to its relationship

[272] Anderson, 2008, p.147

[273] Martin, 2007, p.47

to its object or its source, where these objects are mediated through imaginative investment and creation, not through recollection.[274]

Roland Barthes' notion of "counter-memory" acts in the same manner. According to him, photography can never be a memory, in fact it blocks memory by becoming a counter-memory.[275] So in the sense of Sebald's photographic practice, Stephanie Harris does not hesitate to ask how a photograph can communicate any intelligible meaning without recoursing to cultural codes that elide its specifity.[276] Martin answers this by saying that it cannot, whereas Jeff Adams points out "hybridity" which Sebald finds in fact and fiction. According to Sebald, photographs are comprised of "irritating" mix of truth and falsification, similar to personal and vivid memories which are often false.[277] So postmodern inclination towards "documentary literature" becomes distorted in Sebald's works. As Harris remarks, Sebald forces his reader to look beyond the simple readings of these photographs as documentary elements, while prompting to ask how they might function with and against the language of the text itself.[278] For this, it is necessary to refer to Noam M. Elcott. According to him, the mediation of spaces – sometimes contradictory, sometimes overlapping – between text and image corresponds to lingual abyss and it is called translation.[279] It runs parallel to Hirsh's

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[274] Long, 2003, p.122

[275] Martin, 2007, p.52

[276] *Ibid*.

[277] Anderson, 2008, p.147

[278] Harris, 2001, p.380

[279] Noam M. Elcott, "Tattered Snapshots and Castaway Tongues: An Essay at Layout and Translation with W.G. Sebald" *The Germanic Review*, 79.3 (2004), p.204

term ”imaginative investment and creation,” and it is at this point that, Sebald manages to distinguish himself from both fiction and cultural history. According to James P. Martin, the translation process is carried “not through direct narrational injunction but through an attention to empirical detail combined with the subtle emotional registration.” Accordingly, Sebald’s poetic images provide access to “surreal seam” by revealing the reverse side of the images.[280] In the end, Sebald’s particular engagements in his works create a practical answer to the aporias of theory, and therefore image and text become a dual tool to communicate a particular relationship to the past.[281]

3.1.2 Function of Photography

Indeed photographs are “certificate of presence” in Roland Barthes’ terms, but when they are integrated into a textual narrative what happens? Taking this question one step further, Mary Griffin Wilson asks, “What does it mean to integrate such images into the utterance of Austerlitz himself?”[282] Several authors such as Silke Horstkotte, Stefanie Harris, Silke Arnold-de Simine, Adrian Curtin, agree that photographs in Sebald’s ouvre do not play the role of illustrating the text. There is a much more complex relationship between word and image.

Stefanie Harris claims that photographs prepare the reader for the text, “to underscore pertinent themes and to illustrate abstract ideas,”[283] where Mary Griffin Wilson argues that images might point to the only stable referent, the

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[280] Martin, 2007, p.45

[281] Elcott, 2004, p.204

[282] Wilson, 2013, p.56

[283] Harris, 2001, p.379

only stable "real", which the text positions itself to be. In return, text points back to images. However, in this bidirectional interaction, images are said to resist such integration, leading to the possibility of an ultimate fail.[284] This challenging notion is not only between text and image. As Anne Fuchs explains, this emplotment urges to "disturb the binary opposition between life and death, remembering and forgetting, authenticity and fiction, or absence and presence."[285] However, in a broader context, what Sebald tries to do is to allegorise the function of representation. This is rendered as "ontological hide and seek" by J.J. Long, which invites and thwarts attempts to separate fact from fiction, where "this uncertain ontological status of the majority of the photographs enhances the ghostly quality of a prose that makes the recuperation of the painful traces of history, its primary concern."[286] This is a kind of authentic learning and relearning which filters the visual and the textual narratives, in Jeff Adams' argument. It is, in a way, remembering, however, it is not only the things that are remembered, but more importantly, how they are remembered.

Recalling here Carolin Duttlinger – cited in Anne Fuchs – says, photography in Austerlitz provides "both a theoretical model and a mode of visual testimony that accompanies the protagonist's quest for his repressed past."[287] In the journey through the past, it is seen that in Austerlitz, the text is situated in the present and delivered through a narrator who is always in the act of listening and observing. In this way, a critical distance is achieved. This is the ethical

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[284] Wilson, 2013, p.56

[285] Anne Fuchs, "W.G. Sebald's Painters: The Function of Fine Art in His Prose Works", *Modern Language Review*, 101.1 (2006), p.168

[286] Fuchs, 2006, p.168

[287] *Ibid*., p.167

point that Sebald enacts, due to not presenting history directly as a "seemingly objective narrative of real events."[288] Also creating a distance in time itself, photographs manage to create a form of witnessing that is itself a process, rather than a fixed point in history. It is this process that attempts "to render the past visible, or rather present, even if it remains outside the proper field of vision."[289]

Especially in traumatic events, like Holocaust, critical distance becomes more crucial. Mark M. Anderson underlines that "images must be suspected for the simple reason that for twelve years Nazi propaganda flooded Germany with doctored images masquerading as historical and racial truth."[290] For the past that ruthlessly denied, forgotten or covered over, Sebald's "stray photographs" – containing "a lot of memory in them"[291] – are considered to be "reality scraps" acting as memorial to what has disappeared. So Silke Horstkotte claims that they can serve as a corrective to the unreliability of human memory. However, as they are capable of lying, photographs' integral role in the narrator's elaborate play, as she would call it, becomes important in making associations with the interdiscursive – intertextual, intermedial, and intericonic – allusions. So the position of the image, layout design, references and quotes, all determine their physical and rhetorical functions.[292]

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[288] Anderson, 2003, p.110

[289] Wilson, 2013, p.72

[290] Anderson, 2003, p.109

[291] Long, 2003, p.117

[292] Silke Horstkotte, "Photo-Text Topographies: Photography and the Representation of Space in W.G. Sebald and Monika Maron", *Poetics Today*, 29.1 (2008), p.54

3.1.3 Image-Text Construction

3.1.3.1 Physical

Image-text relationship is not newly adopted in Sebald's style. Through different representational techniques, the borders between text and image collapse in his works. According to Noam M. Elcotts's review of the four prose works of Sebald, a friendly "cut-and-past paste photomontage" appears in *Vertigo*, whereas *The Rings of Saturn* uses "reproductions of a dubious signature." Going one step further, Sebald adopts a Nazi propaganda collage in *The Emigrants*. In *Austerlitz*, which has been identified as a respectively different style from his earlier prose narratives, Sebald puts digital dimension in question where he manuipulates the layout of his texts so that "they double as labels, captions and titles of photographs."[293]

Alexander Verdolini notes that in the earlier works, images interrupt the narrative, whereas images in *Austerlitz* do not alienate, due to the smooth relationship with the fictional character of the book.[294] However, this situation requires extra attention to distinguish fact from fiction.

First physical characteristic that makes photographs stand out in text, is absence of captions. In the conventional sense, as Barthes explores, the caption acts as a device to tie image's meaning down. As Elizabeth Chaplin explains, the function of caption is that they constrain the perspective of the reader in a way that create a single meaning. Photographs really do record what is out there, in this way they become scientific, in the positivist sense, claiming the objectivity of knowledge. However, what it does create is a conflict with the

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[293] Elcott, 2004, p.216

[294] Verdolini, 2013, p.614

aims and the methods of critical theory. "Caption leeches" in Chaplin's words, "almost all autonomy from the photograph itself, virtually guarantees a passive reader."[295]

What happens then in Sebald's ouvre? Silke Horstkotte reminds that absence of any textual reference prevents the photograph from working neither as an evidence, nor as an illustration. Without captions, photographs become much more autonomous. Chaplin reads this attempt as a "release from their positivist cage."[296] Sebald uses this absence to push the borders in evincing the historical occurrences which contain hidden political significance.

Beside the practice of uncaptioning, also the lack of frames aims to break the conventional understanding. Many reproductions of the plans, maps, photographs, sketches, documents with white or light background blur the line between the physical space of text and the photograph. As Horstkotte claims:

> this arrangement also makes photos integral and a discriminate part of the fictional discourse rather than an illustration or supplement of it. At the same time, the seamless insertion of photographs into the narrative makes for an unsettling reading experience.[297]

In both cases, layout of the two-dimensional space of the page becomes more important, as those "silent agents" gain meaning from the textual narrative, by which they are surrounded. As again Horstkotte states, these formal concerns produce different possibilities for the construction of rhetoric. By simply shifting a line of narrative underneath a photograph may easily break the

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[295] Elizabeth Chaplin, "The Convention of Captioning: W.G. Sebald and the Release of the Captive Image", *Visual Studies*, 21.1 (2006), p.50

[296] Chaplin, 2006, p.50

[297] Horstkotte, 2008, p.57

conventional understanding of the caption, where it acts as a caption not to identify the photograph but to flash an inspiration in the reader's mind.[298]

But here, translation of the work becomes an important issue. For example, the cases, which Wilson illustrates, are actually valid for the German version of *Austerlitz*. Therefore, it should be accepted that different linguistic versions have different image-text relations. German reader and English reader are treated not in the same exact manner, because they have different cultural backgrounds. At this point, Silke Horstkotte indicates:

> translations of Sebald's work have approached the photograph as subordinate (indeed irrelevant) to the verbal narrative, willingfully rearranging the photo-text topography in ways that disturb or destroy the photographs's interaction with specific sections of the text.[299]

Actually, Sebald played an active role in the translation process during which he was constantly in dialogue with Anthea Bell, the translator, so the work did not become a commercially translated version. In the correspondence process – which is held with the original manuscripts at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach – Anthea Bell sent her tanslations to Sebald for approval. This contains, for example, German words such as *Barackenbestandteillager* and *Zusatzkostenberechnungsschein*, the parts of Terezin ghetto translated as "hut camp made up of constituent parts" and "additional expenses computation slip" **(fig.3.1.1)** In return, Sebald replied her with the following comment:

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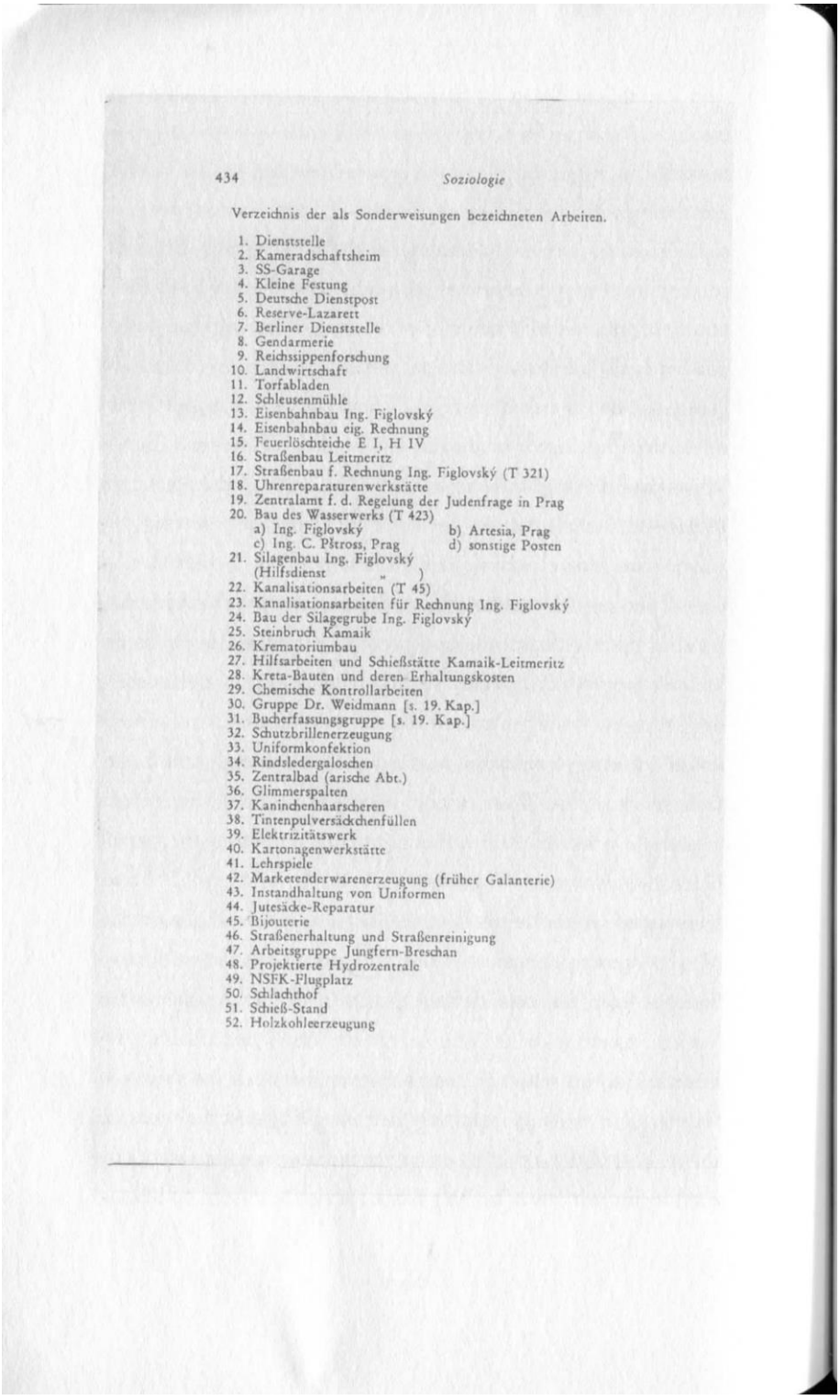
[298] *Ibid*.

[299] *Ibid*.



434 *Soziologie*

Verzeichnis der als Sonderweisungen bezeichneten Arbeiten.

1. Dienststelle
2. Kameradschaftsheim
3. SS-Garage
4. Kleine Festung
5. Deutsche Dienstpost
6. Reserve-Lazarett
7. Berliner Dienststelle
8. Gendarmerie
9. Reichssippenforschung
10. Landwirtschaft
11. Torfabladen
12. Schleusenmühle
13. Eisenbahnbau Ing. Figlovský
14. Eisenbahnbau eig. Rechnung
15. Feuerlöschteiche E I, H IV
16. Straßenbau Leitmeritz
17. Straßenbau f. Rechnung Ing. Figlovský (T 321)
18. Uhrenreparaturenwerkstätte
19. Zentralamt f. d. Regelung der Judenfrage in Prag
20. Bau des Wasserwerks (T 423)
    a) Ing. Figlovský b) Artesia, Prag
    c) Ing. C. Pštross, Prag d) sonstige Posten
21. Silagenbau Ing. Figlovský
    (Hilfsdienst ")
22. Kanalisationsarbeiten (T 45)
23. Kanalisationsarbeiten für Rechnung Ing. Figlovský
24. Bau der Silagegrube Ing. Figlovský
25. Steinbruch Kamaik
26. Krematoriumbau
27. Hilfsarbeiten und Schießstätte Kamaik-Leitmeritz
28. Kreta-Bauten und deren Erhaltungskosten
29. Chemische Kontrollarbeiten
30. Gruppe Dr. Weidmann [s. 19. Kap.]
31. Bucherfassungsgruppe [s. 19. Kap.]
32. Schutzbrillenerzeugung
33. Uniformkonfektion
34. Rindsledergaloschen
35. Zentralbad (arische Abt.)
36. Glimmerspalten
37. Kaninchenhaarscheren
38. Tintenpulversäckchenfüllen
39. Elektrizitätswerk
40. Kartonagenwerkstätte
41. Lehrspiele
42. Marketenderwarenerzeugung (früher Galanterie)
43. Instandhaltung von Uniformen
44. Jutesäcke-Reparatur
45. Bijouterie
46. Straßenerhaltung und Straßenreinigung
47. Arbeitsgruppe Jungfern-Breschan
48. Projektierte Hydrozentrale
49. NSFK-Flugplatz
50. Schlachthof
51. Schieß-Stand
52. Holzkohleerzeugung

Figure 3.1.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.238

> Anthea, I think we should leave these terms unexplained. It may be a good thing for the readers to have to stare at them in incomprehension.[300]

Yet his aim of presenting the list was to convey incomprehensibility, where he contented only with the explanation of "in its almost futuristic deformation of social life, the ghetto system had something incomprehensible and unreal about it," just to make sure the English readers would grasp the whole point.[301] On the other hand, he suggested Anthea Bell to maneuver certain bits as she preferred by adding "they don't always have to come in the same spot as in the original,"[302] simply because different languages required different layouts.

To turn back to the examples, which Wilson mentions, the first one is the image of Palace of Justice in Brussels, which appear to be right under the German word for "represent" or "depict". Wilson claims that there is no chance for it to be accidental and she quotes Barthes – "the Photograph is never anything but an antiphon of 'Look,' 'See,' 'Here it is'" – to support this usage of image and text which represents the failures of capitalist modernity. In the English version, however, it appears on the top of the next page, right after the words of "steps of the Palace of Justice". **(fig.3.1.2)**

The impression seems to be lost. However, the image itself does not show the "steps", rather it depicts the monstrosity in the city silhouette. So the function of the image still engages with the textual narrative. The description of the narrative works both ways. The reader is introduced by the name of the building firstly, and then by its image. The content comes right after, so that

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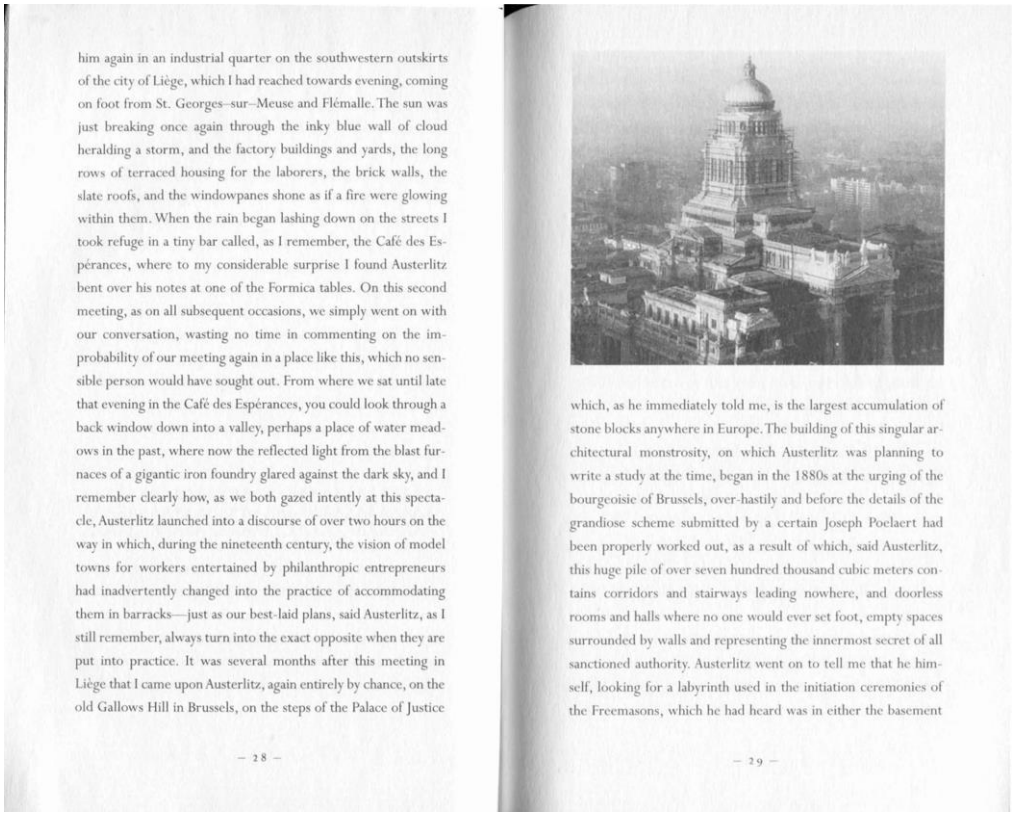
[300] Modlinger, 2012, pp.359-360

[301] *Ibid*., p.360

[302] *Ibid*., p.347

one stops to gaze at the photograph for a while and then continues. However, after reading the passage, once again she/he feels obliged to look back at the image to see the 'monstrosity'. In this way, photograph becomes experienced by educated eyes, that search for 'punctum.'



him again in an industrial quarter on the southwestern outskirts of the city of Liège, which I had reached towards evening, coming on foot from St. Georges-sur-Meuse and Flémalle. The sun was just breaking once again through the inky blue wall of cloud heralding a storm, and the factory buildings and yards, the long rows of terraced housing for the laborers, the brick walls, the slate roofs, and the windowpanes shone as if a fire were glowing within them. When the rain began lashing down on the streets I took refuge in a tiny bar called, as I remember, the Café des Espérances, where to my considerable surprise I found Austerlitz bent over his notes at one of the Formica tables. On this second meeting, as on all subsequent occasions, we simply went on with our conversation, wasting no time in commenting on the improbability of our meeting again in a place like this, which no sensible person would have sought out. From where we sat until late that evening in the Café des Espérances, you could look through a back window down into a valley, perhaps a place of water meadows in the past, where now the reflected light from the blast furnaces of a gigantic iron foundry glared against the dark sky, and I remember clearly how, as we both gazed intently at this spectacle, Austerlitz launched into a discourse of over two hours on the way in which, during the nineteenth century, the vision of model towns for workers entertained by philanthropic entrepreneurs had inadvertently changed into the practice of accommodating them in barracks—just as our best-laid plans, said Austerlitz, as I still remember, always turn into the exact opposite when they are put into practice. It was several months after this meeting in Liège that I came upon Austerlitz, again entirely by chance, on the old Gallows Hill in Brussels, on the steps of the Palace of Justice

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which, as he immediately told me, is the largest accumulation of stone blocks anywhere in Europe. The building of this singular architectural monstrosity, on which Austerlitz was planning to write a study at the time, began in the 1880s at the urging of the bourgeoisie of Brussels, over-hastily and before the details of the grandiose scheme submitted by a certain Joseph Poelaert had been properly worked out, as a result of which, said Austerlitz, this huge pile of over seven hundred thousand cubic meters contains corridors and stairways leading nowhere, and doorless rooms and halls where no one would ever set foot, empty spaces surrounded by walls and representing the innermost secret of all sanctioned authority. Austerlitz went on to tell me that he himself, looking for a labyrinth used in the initiation ceremonies of the Freemasons, which he had heard was in either the basement

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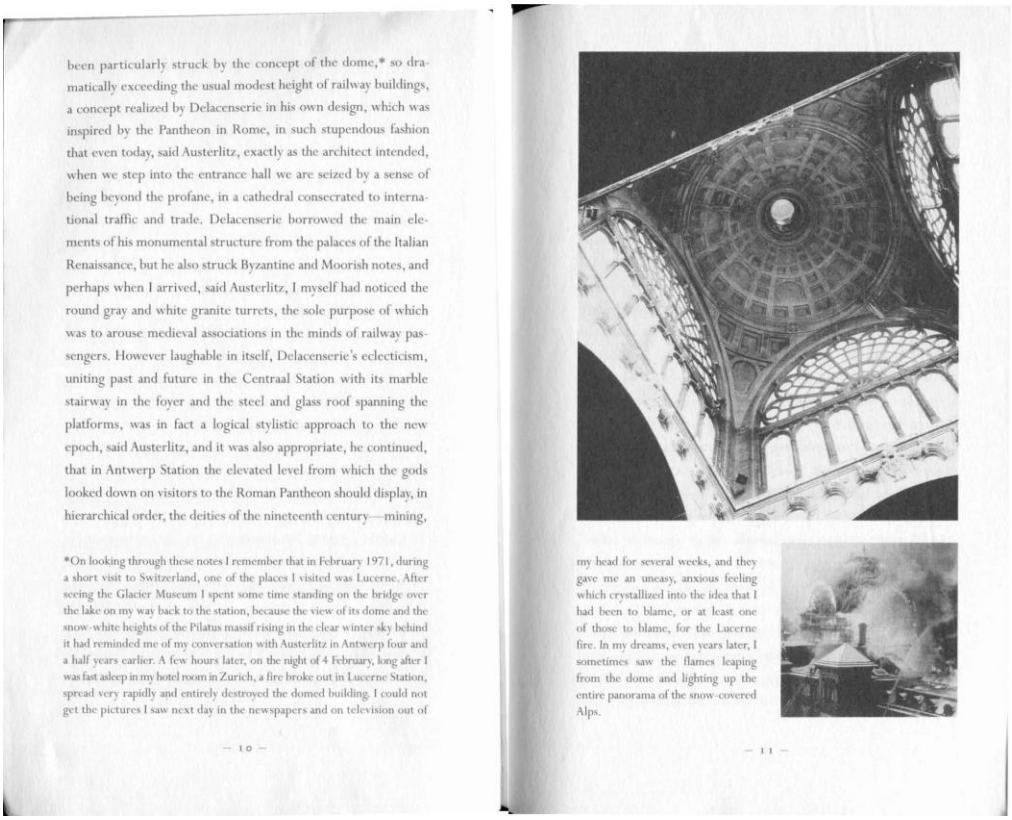
Figure 3.1.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.28-29

Second example is Lucerne Station, where the image of the interior of the dome appears following a hypen in the middle of the word "Kon-struction" with the latter part of the word appearing on the following page. **(fig.3.1.3)** Wilson explains this section as such:

> Given that this page is also punctuated by a sizable footnote – which includes a photograph of the exterior of that same dome on fire – it is possible to read Sebald's placement of this image as a

play on the etymological division of the Latin roots con, "with," and struere, "to pile up." Sebald is indeed building something here, a construct in which images, rather than pointing away from the narrative, function as additional, overlapping layers within it. The Pantheon in Rome (which was itself destroyed in a fire and subsequently rebuilt) is thus projected by association onto Lucerne, which is in turn projected onto the station in Antwerp, where Austerlitz and the narrator are speaking.[303]



been particularly struck by the concept of the dome,* so dramatically exceeding the usual modest height of railway buildings, a concept realized by Delacenserie in his own design, which was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, in such stupendous fashion that even today, said Austerlitz, exactly as the architect intended, when we step into the entrance hall we are seized by a sense of being beyond the profane, in a cathedral consecrated to international traffic and trade. Delacenserie borrowed the main elements of his monumental structure from the palaces of the Italian Renaissance, but he also struck Byzantine and Moorish notes, and perhaps when I arrived, said Austerlitz, I myself had noticed the round gray and white granite turrets, the sole purpose of which was to arouse medieval associations in the minds of railway passengers. However laughable in itself, Delacenserie's eclecticism, uniting past and future in the Centraal Station with its marble stairway in the foyer and the steel and glass roof spanning the platforms, was in fact a logical stylistic approach to the new epoch, said Austerlitz, and it was also appropriate, he continued, that in Antwerp Station the elevated level from which the gods looked down on visitors to the Roman Pantheon should display, in hierarchical order, the deities of the nineteenth century—mining,

*On looking through these notes I remember that in February 1971, during a short visit to Switzerland, one of the places I visited was Lucerne. After seeing the Glacier Museum I spent some time standing on the bridge over the lake on my way back to the station, because the view of its dome and the snow-white heights of the Pilatus massif rising in the clear winter sky behind it had reminded me of my conversation with Austerlitz in Antwerp four and a half years earlier. A few hours later, on the night of 4 February, long after I was fast asleep in my hotel room in Zurich, a fire broke out in Lucerne Station, spread very rapidly and entirely destroyed the domed building. I could not get the pictures I saw next day in the newspapers and on television out of

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my head for several weeks, and they gave me an uneasy, anxious feeling which crystallized into the idea that I had been to blame, or at least one of those to blame, for the Lucerne fire. In my dreams, even years later, I sometimes saw the flames leaping from the dome and lighting up the entire panorama of the snow-covered Alps.

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Figure 3.1.3: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.10-11

In the English version, layout is designed in such a way that, in contrast to the previous example, the reader becomes acquainted with the textual narrative first, reads the Pantheon comparison that Wilson mentions and gets familiar

[303] Wilson, 2013, p.56

with iron-glass architecture. Right after, a footnote – giving a lengthy description about the station – appears at the end of the page. The small remainder of this information runs over the next page, just next to the photograph depicting a fire. So the cultural background seems to be created. The photograph cannot be easily identified as Lucerne Station but since the fire in 1971 is captured, one can argue that it is the death of the dying rather than the future death frozen in time, and animated with textual references. Finally, on the very next page, the narrative resumes giving a critique of modernity, covered in the previous chapter. Accordingly, it can be said that an animation of a multi-layered reading is accomplished within this verbo-visual intersection.

Apart from these two examples, the engagement of text and image in the Breendonk section of the book – in the English version – can be given as a verification of this notion of caption. **(fig.3.1.4)** It is the walking expedition of the narrator that he takes by himself. He describes the building and indicates that he tries to visualize the star-shaped plan of it – as delivered to him by Jacques Austerlitz. However, it seems impossible to grasp it in a larger-scale. The narrator says:

> I found myself unable to connect it with anything shaped by human civilization, or even with the ilent relic ofour prehistory and early history.[304]

After this expression, the sentence comes in the shape of "And the longer I looked at it, the more often it –" The hypen, here, represents the photograph. So, a shapeless concrete block that looks like a massive alien appears in the bottom of the page, disrupting the textual narrative, and pushes the reader to really to "look at it" as if the reader shares the same time segment with the narrator in that place. On the next page, two images are introduced in the loose

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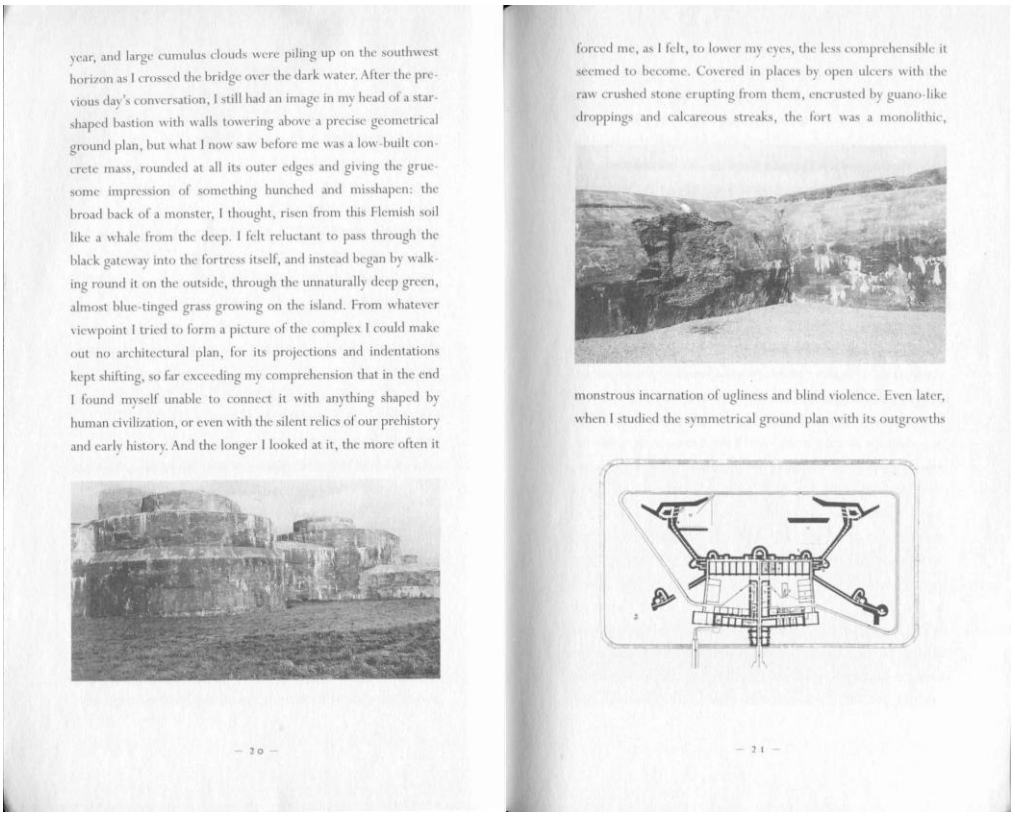
[304] Sebald, 2001, p.20

textual narrative. The first one comes after the word “monolithic”, the next one which is the urban scale map of the fortress, comes after the word “outgrows.” As such, they provide impressions about excess of power, rather than the depictions of the building itself. Because the word “monolithic” cannot achive what the photograph does, where the “outgrow” becomes ineffective without the visual narration.



year, and large cumulus clouds were piling up on the southwest horizon as I crossed the bridge over the dark water. After the previous day's conversation, I still had an image in my head of a star-shaped bastion with walls towering above a precise geometrical ground plan, but what I now saw before me was a low-built concrete mass, rounded at all its outer edges and giving the gruesome impression of something hunched and misshapen: the broad back of a monster, I thought, risen from this Flemish soil like a whale from the deep. I felt reluctant to pass through the black gateway into the fortress itself, and instead began by walking round it on the outside, through the unnaturally deep green, almost blue-tinged grass growing on the island. From whatever viewpoint I tried to form a picture of the complex I could make out no architectural plan, for its projections and indentations kept shifting, so far exceeding my comprehension that in the end I found myself unable to connect it with anything shaped by human civilization, or even with the silent relics of our prehistory and early history. And the longer I looked at it, the more often it

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forced me, as I felt, to lower my eyes, the less comprehensible it seemed to become. Covered in places by open ulcers with the raw crushed stone erupting from them, encrusted by guano-like droppings and calcareous streaks, the fort was a monolithic,

monstrous incarnation of ugliness and blind violence. Even later, when I studied the symmetrical ground plan with its outgrowths

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Figure 3.1.4: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.20-21

3.1.3.2 Allegorical

“Sebald’s presentation and placement of photographs is always suggestive of a meaning that negates the relegating of the photographic image to a subordinate

position," [305] says Silke Horstkotte by reminding the bimedial physical arrangement of text and image. On the other hand, lack of direct textual references or ambiguous placement of visual and textual narratives points out a greater association, triggering the interpretive integration.

Daene Blackler, associates Sebald's intercalated use of images with concepts of "statis" and "kinesis" which unfold the mind of the reader by the random sequence of the exiled photographic images. She states:

> the statis is not only the frozen images, those instantiations of the past, which rupture the verbal text, but also the points at which the narration or digressive reflection slows down to a contemplative pause, before the journey of the travelling pilgrim begins once more in his written text, the kinesis – constructed present tense – informing the reader's mind.[306]

The relationship of kinesis and statis is revealed in one of the many examples through the middle of the story, when Austerlitz finds Vera, his caretaker, in Prague. On his third day there, after long conversations with Vera, Austerlitz decides to go to the Seminar Garden, just as they did in the past. The sight helps him to remember the cherry and pear trees, old ladies with bad-tempered little dogs and so on. Then he continues to depict his experience there. Austerlitz tells:

> I sat on a bench in the sun until nearly midday, looking out over the buildings over the Lesser Quarter and the river Vltava at the panaroma of the city, which seemed to be veined with the curving cracks and rifts of past time, like the varnish on a painting." Then the textual voice shifts to the narrator where he continues as "A little later, said Austerlitz, I discovered another such pattern created by no discernible law in the entwined roots of a chestnut tree

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[305] Horstkotte, 2008, p.57

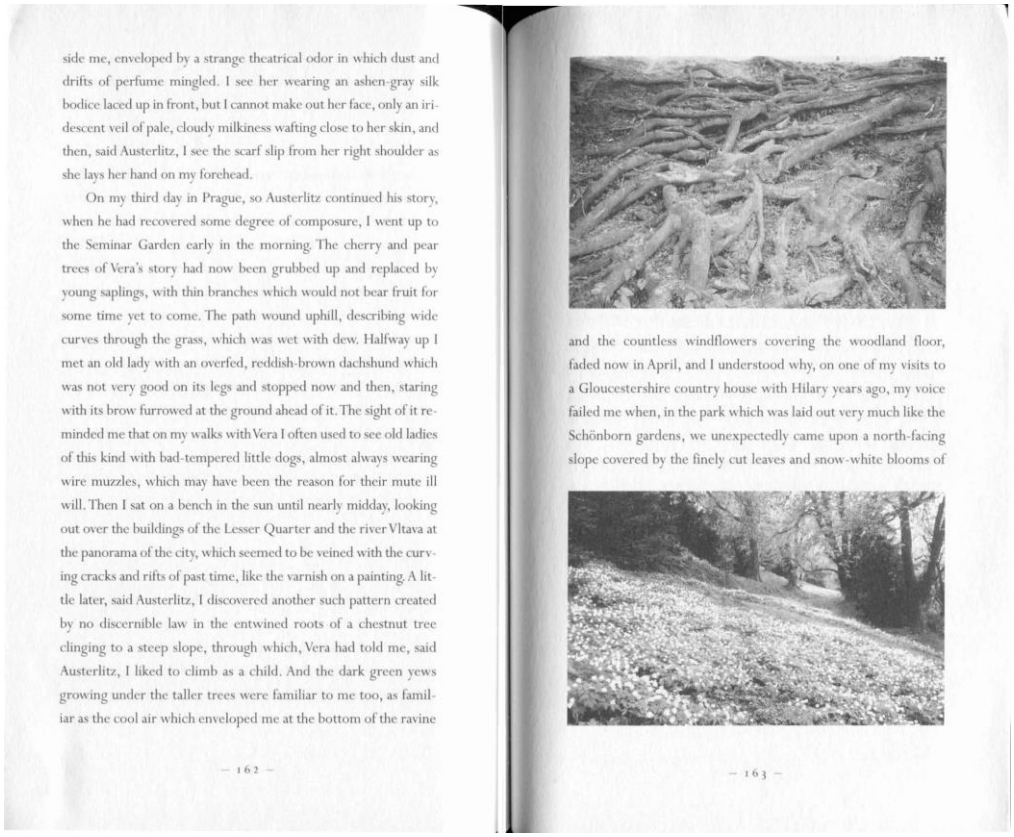
[306] Blackler, 2009, p.370

> clinging to a steep slope, through which, Vera had told me, said Austerlitz, I liked to climb as a child. And the dark green yews growing under the taller trees were familiar to me, too, as familiar as the cool air which enveloped me at the bottom of the ravine and the countless windflowers covering the woodland floor, faded now in April, and I understood why, on one of my visit to a Gloucestershire country house with Hilary years ago, my failed me when, in the park which was laid out very much like the Schönborn gardens, we unexpectedly came upon a north-facing slope covered by the finely cut leaves and snow-white blooms of the March-flowering Anemone nemorosa.[307]

With the two photographs – one is at the top of the page, coming after "ravine", the other at the bottom, placed right after "snow-white blooms" – **(fig.3.1.5)** whole narrative becomes an access to the past. In other words, the past is still available in this place, creating a family resemblance with Gloucestershire memories. Daene Blackler interprets the aura created around the image as a connection to Austerlitz's joy at having found Vera in Prague. This continuum of time, which is the kinesis, right here collapses into the statis of temporal freeze. Because, as she continues to explain, the symbolism of the yew, which come together with trees, dogs and paintings gives the reader pause. The chestnut roots are a pathetic fallacy for Austerlitz's own mental condition, a pathetic reminder that his mother and father have been lost forever, outlived by a tree, which is the condition of being consoling and poignant at the same time. It is the literary layering of Sebald's prose, the "deep focus" of cultural allusion built for readers who know how to read in the literary tradition. As the apparently disconnected elements come together just as in a carefully engraved still-life, created repetitions result in a pattern, which Austerlitz calls "pattern

[307] Sebald, 2001, pp.162-163

created by no discernible law," and encourages both him and the reader – in a multi-layered cultural context – to seek meaning and significanc.[308]



side me, enveloped by a strange theatrical odor in which dust and drifts of perfume mingled. I see her wearing an ashen-gray silk bodice laced up in front, but I cannot make out her face, only an iridescent veil of pale, cloudy milkiness wafting close to her skin, and then, said Austerlitz, I see the scarf slip from her right shoulder as she lays her hand on my forehead.

On my third day in Prague, so Austerlitz continued his story, when he had recovered some degree of composure, I went up to the Seminar Garden early in the morning. The cherry and pear trees of Vera's story had now been grubbed up and replaced by young saplings, with thin branches which would not bear fruit for some time yet to come. The path wound uphill, describing wide curves through the grass, which was wet with dew. Halfway up I met an old lady with an overfed, reddish-brown dachshund which was not very good on its legs and stopped now and then, staring with its brow furrowed at the ground ahead of it. The sight of it reminded me that on my walks with Vera I often used to see old ladies of this kind with bad-tempered little dogs, almost always wearing wire muzzles, which may have been the reason for their mute ill will. Then I sat on a bench in the sun until nearly midday, looking out over the buildings of the Lesser Quarter and the river Vltava at the panorama of the city, which seemed to be veined with the curving cracks and rifts of past time, like the varnish on a painting. A little later, said Austerlitz, I discovered another such pattern created by no discernible law in the entwined roots of a chestnut tree clinging to a steep slope, through which, Vera had told me, said Austerlitz, I liked to climb as a child. And the dark green yews growing under the taller trees were familiar to me too, as familiar as the cool air which enveloped me at the bottom of the ravine

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and the countless windflowers covering the woodland floor, faded now in April, and I understood why, on one of my visits to a Gloucestershire country house with Hilary years ago, my voice failed me when, in the park which was laid out very much like the Schönborn gardens, we unexpectedly came upon a north-facing slope covered by the finely cut leaves and snow-white blooms of

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Figure 3.1.5: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.162-163

Another example is from the very end of the book, after Austerlitz learns most of his past. It is important in terms of metaphorical engagement with the text, but more importantly, it is bounded metaphorically to the next – the last photograph of the book – image. Again the image is introduced after the lengthy narration that depicts the relationship of Austerlitz's house in Alderney street and the adjacent cemetery. In the text, the narrator emphasizes that Austerlitz years ago gave him the keys to the house in Alderney Street by

[308] Blackler, 2009, p.371

saying that he is welcome to stay whenever he likes and that he can study the pile of photographs – as mentioned earlier. One detail is critical to connect this story to the Jewish Cemetery, which the narrator tells as follows:

> And I should not omit, he added, to ring the bell at the gateway in the brick wall adjoining his house, for behind that wall, although he had never been able to see it from any of his windows, there was a plot where lime trees and lilacs grew and in which members of the Ashkenazi communşty had been buried ever since the eighteenth century, including Rabbi David Tevele Schiff and Rabbi Samuel Falk, the Baal Shem of London.[309]

After that, the narrator mentions that Austerlitz discovered the cemetery only a few days before he left London when the gate in the wall stood open for the first time. The verbal description of the cemetery is cut by the photograph itself. J.J. Long, in his expedition drops by the house on the Alderney Street. He is able find the house adjacent to the high brick wall, easily. However, he cannot enter the cemetery. So the image is not verified, but since it is a Jewish cemetery, Long insists that its existence in the text is a kind of metaphor for Austerlitz's own relationship to his Jewish identity:

> He discovers his Jewish identity belatedly. Similarly he lives for the entirety of his adult life in the house we have just seen, not realizing just next door is a cemetery that embodies the very distinguished history of Jews in London.[310]

This part of the narration is just a time lapse in their own timeline. The narrator mentions that he could not get the idea behind this story and then jumps into the actual scene which is set in Paris. As they are parted, the narrator decides to stop in Antwerp to see Nocturama and Breendonk once again, because of an unknown instinct, which he relates to this story afterwards. He says that he

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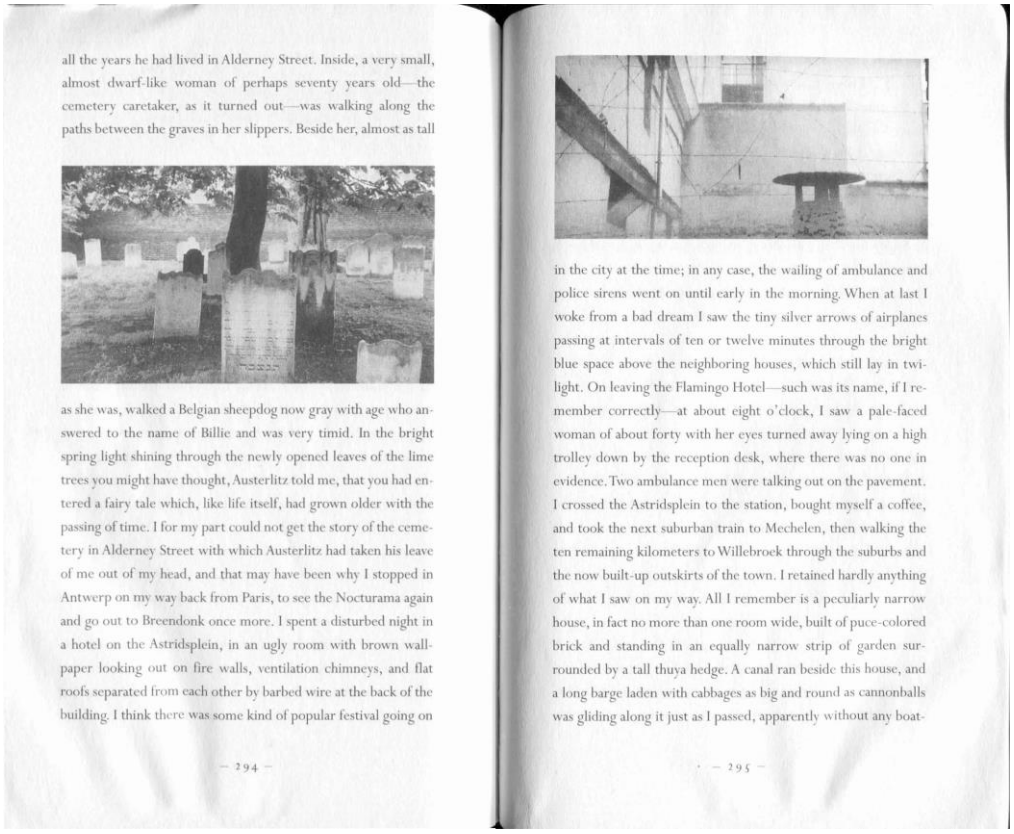
[309] Sebald, 2001, p.293

[310] SOURCE Photographic Review, 2013

spent a disturbed night in a hotel on the Astridsplein, "… in an ugly room with brown wallpaper looking out on fire walls, ventilation chimneys, and flat roofs separated from each other by barbed wire at the back of the building."[311] **(fig.3.1.6)**



all the years he had lived in Alderney Street. Inside, a very small, almost dwarf-like woman of perhaps seventy years old—the cemetery caretaker, as it turned out—was walking along the paths between the graves in her slippers. Beside her, almost as tall

as she was, walked a Belgian sheepdog now gray with age who answered to the name of Billie and was very timid. In the bright spring light shining through the newly opened leaves of the lime trees you might have thought, Austerlitz told me, that you had entered a fairy tale which, like life itself, had grown older with the passing of time. I for my part could not get the story of the cemetery in Alderney Street with which Austerlitz had taken his leave of me out of my head, and that may have been why I stopped in Antwerp on my way back from Paris, to see the Nocturama again and go out to Breendonk once more. I spent a disturbed night in a hotel on the Astridsplein, in an ugly room with brown wallpaper looking out on fire walls, ventilation chimneys, and flat roofs separated from each other by barbed wire at the back of the building. I think there was some kind of popular festival going on

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in the city at the time; in any case, the wailing of ambulance and police sirens went on until early in the morning. When at last I woke from a bad dream I saw the tiny silver arrows of airplanes passing at intervals of ten or twelve minutes through the bright blue space above the neighboring houses, which still lay in twilight. On leaving the Flamingo Hotel—such was its name, if I remember correctly—at about eight o'clock, I saw a pale-faced woman of about forty with her eyes turned away lying on a high trolley down by the reception desk, where there was no one in evidence. Two ambulance men were talking out on the pavement. I crossed the Astridsplein to the station, bought myself a coffee, and took the next suburban train to Mechelen, then walking the ten remaining kilometers to Willebroek through the suburbs and the now built-up outskirts of the town. I retained hardly anything of what I saw on my way. All I remember is a peculiarly narrow house, in fact no more than one room wide, built of puce-colored brick and standing in an equally narrow strip of garden surrounded by a tall thuya hedge. A canal ran beside this house, and a long barge laden with cabbages as big and round as cannonballs was gliding along it just as I passed, apparently without any boat-

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Figure 3.1.6: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.294-295

Not surprisingly, the photograph, which seems very familiar due to the textual narrative, waits for the reader at the top of the next page, but just in the middle of the sentence, where the narrator mentions a kind of a popular festival going on in the city. The narration resembles a series of disconnected and static

[311] Sebald, 2001, p.295

events. However, as Long points out, these textual and visual narratives create an interesting pair. He says that the image of the hotel room is important not for its face value but for its power to echo the Holocaust: "the barbed wire, chimneys of the crematoria and so these last two images sum up the vibrant, deep, rooted history of Jews in Europe as well as their aliniation by Nazis."[312]

It can be seen in *Austerlitz* that although the photographs constitute the majority of the visual material, stills of audiovisuals, prints, postcards, tickets, reproduced images of documents – that cannot be considered as photographs – and paintings play an indispensable role in creating metaphorical associations within the text. One of them is the reproduction of a small watercolor entitled *Funeral at Lausanne* by J.W.M. Turner[313] **(fig.3.1.7)** This watercolor, which is rendered in a fleeting fashion, is located right after a full page of textual narration about Uncle Evelyn and Great-Uncle Alphonso Fitzpatrick's funerals in Barmouth. This memory is conveyed through Jacques Austerlitz, in the first hand:

> I think it was in early October 1957, he continued abruptly after some time, when I was on the point of going to Paris to pursue the studies of arshitectural history on which I had embarked the previous year at the Courtauld Institute, that I last visited the Fitzpatricks in Barmouth for the double funeral of Uncle Evelyn and Great-Uncle Alphonso. They had died almost within a day of each other, Alphonso of a troke a he wa picking up his favorite apples out in the garden, Evelyn in his icy bed, cramped with pain and anguish. Autumn mist filled the whole valley on the morning of the burial of these two very different men, Evelyn always at odds with himself and the world, Alphonso animated by a cheerfully equable temperament. Just as the funeral procession began moving towards Cutiau cemetery, the sun broke through the

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[312] SOURCE Photographic Review, 2013

[313] Fuchs, 2006, p.180

> hazy veils above the Mawddach, and a breeze blew along it banks.[314]

Then the reader is introduced to Turner's painting, not visually but verbally. Austerlitz mentions that the elements in the farewell scene of the funeral – "The few dark figures, the group of poplars, the flood of light over the water, the massif of Cader Idris on the far side of the river" – are the ones he rediscovers in Turner's work, dating back 1841. Right here, as Anne Fuchs notes, Sebald gets into more detailed exploration of art's ability to reveal the metaphysical lining of reality. It is neither interpretation nor visualization, but rather ekphrasis that connects two irrelevant natures, two different times to each other.[315] Austerlitz depicts Turner's painting by saying:

> Funeral at Lausanne, dates from 1841, and thus from a time when Turner could hardly travel anymore and dwelt increasingly on ideas of his own mortality, and perhaps for that very reason, when somcthing like this little cortege in Lausanne emerged from his memory, he swiftly set down a few brushstroke in an attempt to capture visions which would m It away again the next moment.[316]

Right after this quotation, after the two words of next sentence – "What particulary" – the watercolor is presented visually. Then Austerlitz continues to tell what attracts him in the picture. It is not the mere similarity of the scene in Lausanne, but the memory prompted in him of his last walk with Gerald in the early summer of 1966, through the vineyards above Morges on the banks of Lake Geneva. Though this walk is not described, his discourse leaps back in the "sheets of past" to the day of funeral. Mary Griffin Wilson marks this metaphorical association as a gathering of Cutiau, Lausanne, and Lake Geneva

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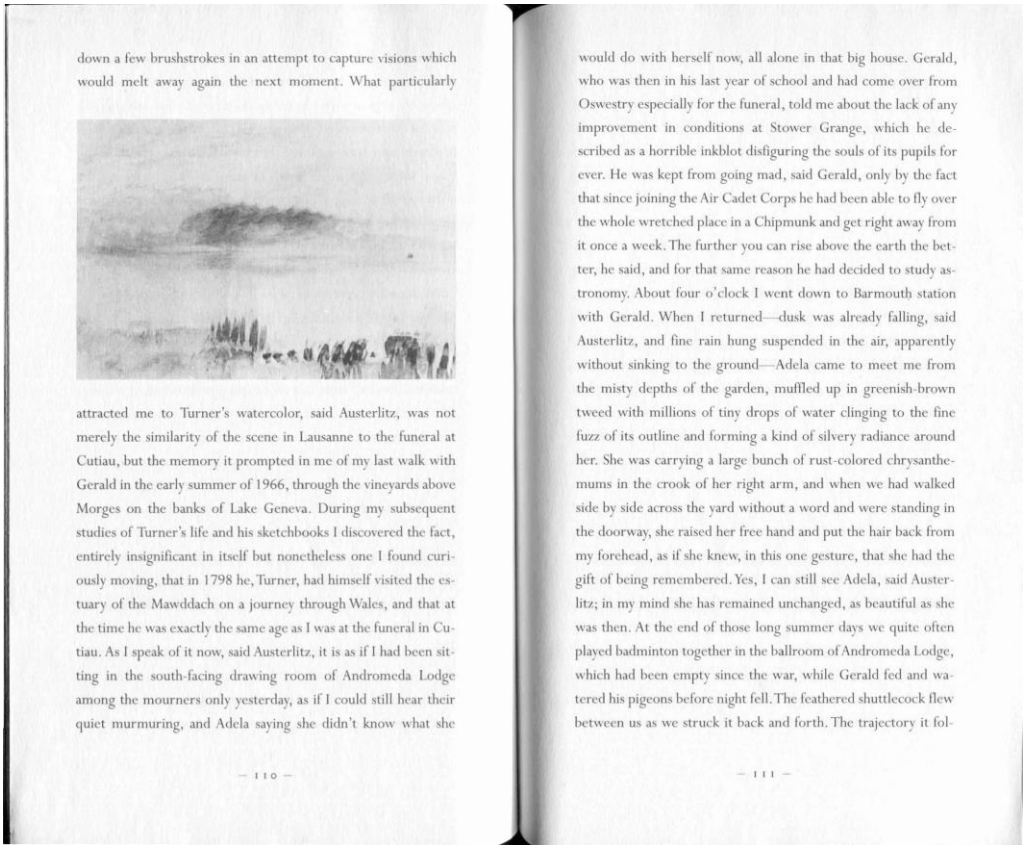
[314] Sebald, 2001, p.109

[315] Fuchs, 2006, p.181

[316] Sebald, 2001, pp.109-110

in a funeral haze – just as what Sebald does with the other architectural sites, which seem irrelevant, bounding all together. This event is also a prepatory information to the beginning of Austerlitz's own psychological decline.[317] Moreover, the emotion evoked by Turner's painting about man's mortality, named as a quasi-baroque reflection by Anne Fuchs, grows with Austerlitz's discovery of Turner's passing through the same spot in Wales in 1798 at Austerlitz's age, and in the end, makes the watercolor another emblem of historical loss."[318]



down a few brushstrokes in an attempt to capture visions which would melt away again the next moment. What particularly

attracted me to Turner's watercolor, said Austerlitz, was not merely the similarity of the scene in Lausanne to the funeral at Cutiau, but the memory it prompted in me of my last walk with Gerald in the early summer of 1966, through the vineyards above Morges on the banks of Lake Geneva. During my subsequent studies of Turner's life and his sketchbooks I discovered the fact, entirely insignificant in itself but nonetheless one I found curiously moving, that in 1798 he, Turner, had himself visited the estuary of the Mawddach on a journey through Wales, and that at the time he was exactly the same age as I was at the funeral in Cutiau. As I speak of it now, said Austerlitz, it is as if I had been sitting in the south-facing drawing room of Andromeda Lodge among the mourners only yesterday, as if I could still hear their quiet murmuring, and Adela saying she didn't know what she

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would do with herself now, all alone in that big house. Gerald, who was then in his last year of school and had come over from Oswestry especially for the funeral, told me about the lack of any improvement in conditions at Stower Grange, which he described as a horrible inkblot disfiguring the souls of its pupils for ever. He was kept from going mad, said Gerald, only by the fact that since joining the Air Cadet Corps he had been able to fly over the whole wretched place in a Chipmunk and get right away from it once a week. The further you can rise above the earth the better, he said, and for that same reason he had decided to study astronomy. About four o'clock I went down to Barmouth station with Gerald. When I returned—dusk was already falling, said Austerlitz, and fine rain hung suspended in the air, apparently without sinking to the ground—Adela came to meet me from the misty depths of the garden, muffled up in greenish-brown tweed with millions of tiny drops of water clinging to the fine fuzz of its outline and forming a kind of silvery radiance around her. She was carrying a large bunch of rust-colored chrysanthemums in the crook of her right arm, and when we had walked side by side across the yard without a word and were standing in the doorway, she raised her free hand and put the hair back from my forehead, as if she knew, in this one gesture, that she had the gift of being remembered. Yes, I can still see Adela, said Austerlitz; in my mind she has remained unchanged, as beautiful as she was then. At the end of those long summer days we quite often played badminton together in the ballroom of Andromeda Lodge, which had been empty since the war, while Gerald fed and watered his pigeons before night fell. The feathered shuttlecock flew between us as we struck it back and forth. The trajectory it fol-

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Figure 3.1.7: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.110-111

[317] Wilson, 2013, p.71

[318] Fuchs, 2006, p.180

All of these associations create a layered movement in the reader's mind. Three spatial divisions – represented space, space of representation and the extratextual space of the reader – created by the collaboration of image and text, intersect and overlap with each other as a result of "gap or fissure in representation" in Horstkotte's words, which employs the reader to make the last complementary comment.[319]

3.1.4 Reader Figure

In the construction process of word and image together, one more parameter is included in Sebald's ouvre. Sebald's prose work, specifically *Austerlitz*, activates the relationship between the reader and the written material. *Austerlitz* acts as a document, as a whole, which requires interpretation and critical reflection. Through a variety of representational strategies, Sebald manages to constantly unsettle reader's gaze, therefore, dismantles binary conceptions of the fictional and the factual.[320] For example, regarding reproduced images, one of the most allegorical tricks that Sebald plays with is the narrator's own experience of Austerlitz's engagement with photography. It is in the very beginning of the text where the narrator expresses:

> Once Austerlitz took a camera out of his rucksack, an old Ensign with telescopic bellows, and took several pictures of the mirrors, which were now quite dark, but so far I have been unable to find them among the many hundreds of pictures, most of them unsorted, that he entrusted to me soon after we met again in the winter of 1996.[321]

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[319] Horstkotte, 2008, p.57

[320] *Ibid*., p.72

[321] Sebald, 2001, p.7

With this sublime guidance, the reader inevitably constructs a idea that the photographs placed in the 'novel' are the ones taken by the protagonist himself. Then, it is a full archive of Jacques Austerlitz. But actually, it is not, it is collected by Sebald himself, over the years.

Besides the urge for asking questions revolving around "Is it so, or isn't it so?" in Sebald's own words, the reader is also alerted when he/she turns a new page with photographic insertions. Horstkotte points out that Sebald's reader have to decide which one he/she will look at first, the image or the text:

> Having identified the passage in the verbal narrative that they take to refer to the image, directly or indirectly, readers may then turn back to review the image in light of what they have read (while the text is usually only read once). Depending on the placement of the image in relation to its assumed verbal counterpart (if there is indeed one), the process may involve not only a mobile eye but also a mobile hand: one often has to turn one or several pages back or forward, either because visual images are not reproduced on the same page as the (presumably) corresponding verbal passage or because the verbal discourse continues to refer to an image one has seen on an earlier page.[322]

For this hands-on active reading, the reader also may have to pause on the image before continuing to read, where the textual narrative is purposely vague. This seems to be what Sebald exactly constructs for both the reader outside the text, and the subjects that figure in the narration. This two-part typology of photographs creates a multi-layered image-text relationship that can be seen in Griffin Wilson's example, too. As she explains: "It occurs also when Austerlitz recalls looking at photographs of the submerged town of Llanwddyn and imagines himself as having lived among its occupants."[323] Horstkotte also

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[322] Horstkotte, 2008, p.72

[323] Wilson, 2013, p.54

points out that the effect is simply created by irregular and disorienting spacing of photography vis-à-vis text, which causes stimulation of photographs to act as shortcuts by enabling readers to access images and perceptions. Also in the sense of afterlife, these photographic reproductions, woven with the text, allow the reader to communicate with the sensations beyond the grasp of the narrator.[324]

In this psychoanalytic mode of reading, text, image, typography and translation are melt into one another. A stamp from Theresienstadt, postcards from -with their names- Hotel Eden or Cono del Vesuvio, passports, photographs of gravestones with epitaphs, all these hybrid images with their photo-textuality set a scene for the reader between living and the dead.[325] This access to the temporal also makes the spectator aware of the now that is frozen in. According to Amir Eshel, it is due to the paragraph-long sentences, the narrative's tendency to dissolve in detours and distractions and the visual propositions that reflect "the image, and the now of spectatorship of the reading process." Thus, the time of reading becomes an element of the temporal fabric in the "mysteries of the never be fully depicted or understood past".[326]

At this point, it is important to note what Horstkotte emphasizes. According to her, this immediate access to death and temporality as provided by photographs also troubles the reader by constantly unsettling such moves. In a way putting the reader into a literary exile, where the spectrally voiced writer articulates the spaces between the images as language shaped and leads the spectator to a

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[324] Horstkotte, 2008, p.72

[325] Elcott, 2004, p.216

[326] Eshel, 2003, p.94

disobedient and adventurous state.[327] Then, this medium of obstacle, which directly associates itself with the mental after-images, results in creating a more profound impression about Holocaust, as Elizabeth Chaplin argues, than its direct presentation.[328]

3.2 Act of Moving

> In the second half of the 1960s I traveled repeatedly from England to Belgium, partly for study purposes, partly for other reasons which were never entirely clear to me, staying sometimes for just one or two days, sometimes for several weeks.[329]

Sebald's last book *Austerlitz* opens with this expression of the narrator, and remarkably, the issue of mobility that reveals itself in these very first lines becomes an underlying theme in the book. Actually, the whole story revolving around Jacques Austerlitz, the protagonist, and narrator starts in one of these journeys where the narrator meets him. On a glorious early summer day, in 1967, the narrator arrives in the city of Antwerp, feeling a sense of great indisposition after a train travel. He walks around the inner city, down Jeruzalemstraat, Nachtegaalstraat, Pelikaanstraat, Paradijsstraat and many other streets, and goes to see the Nocturama, of which he gives an extensive sensorial description. Then he continues with *Salle des pas perdus* – the waiting room – in Antwerp Centraal Station where he meets Jacques Austerlitz. As a very distinctive character, Sebald – through the narrator's experience – connects the symbolical image of the Nocturama to Antwerp Centraal Station by means of travel.

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[327] Blackler, 2009, p.381

[328] Chaplin, 2006, p.48

[329] Sebald, 2001, p.3

In the narrative, the act of moving is always bound with diverse conversations, exchanges of ideas, and detailed historical, cultural, sensorial descriptions. Moreover, it is defined with reference to different architectural scales. As can be easily seen throughout the narrative, built environment, in a scale ranging from domestic to urban, plays a major role in *Austerlitz*. As a representation of the hegemony of modernism and of the relationship between time and space, each place/space is narrated according to its pre- and post-histories, establishing new connections between these multi-layered and neglected histories. Yet within these narrations, architectural experiences of different kinds of movement are always present. For example, in the end of 1967, when the narrator and Austerlitz meet again by chance on the steps of Palace of Justice, Austerlitz tells the narrator that he has been looking for a labyrinth used in the initiation ceremonies of the Freemasons. While explaining the history of the building in terms of how it changed and how it was used, he also describes his expedition in its corridors:

> sometimes turning left and then right again, then walking straight ahead and passing through many tall doorways, and once or twice he had climbed flights of creaking wooden stairs which gave the impression of being temporary structures, branching off from the main corridors here and there and leading half a story up or down, only to end in dark cul-de-sacs with roll-top cupboards, lecterns, writing desks, office chairs, and other items of furniture stacked up at the end of them, is if someone had been obliged to hold out there in a state of siege.[330]

These aspects can be seen also in the example of their expedition in London, on the second day of their fifth encounter, in December 1996. Austerlitz fetches the narrator from his hotel – the Great Eastern Hotel, and then, they walk down to the river through Whitechapel and Shoreditch. They stand on the riverbank only for a short period of time, while talking about an article the

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[330] *Ibid*., p.30

narrator has read on the newspaper. Going on downstream from Wapping and Shadwell to the quite basins which reflect the towering office block of the Docklands area, they reach the Foot Tunnel running under the bend of the river, then climb up Greenwich Park, and finally, arrive at the Royal Observatory. Their act of moving while experiencing the space continues in the observatory. They separately study the ingenious observational instruments and measuring devices, quadrants and sextants, chronometers and regulators, displayed in the glass cases. The narrator seems to be impressed not only by these objects, but also by the interior of the building. He says that he is surprised by the simple beauty of the wooden flooring which are made of planks of different widths and continues that the unusually tall windows;

> each divided into a hundred and twenty-two lead-framed square glass panes, through which long telescopes were once turned on eclipses of the sun and the moon, on the intersection of the orbits of the stars with the line of the meridian, on the Leonid meteorite showers and the long-tailed comets flying through space.[331]

Here, strolling in the museum has two significant outcomes. On the one hand, it leads to an extensive discussion on the concept of time which highlights important notions such as "progress", "linearity" and "death", conforming to the characteristics of such a place. On the other hand, although there is no textual explanation, through a reproduced photograph of a clock, the narrative reveals the hidden link of the building to a wider historical context. **(fig.3.2.1)** J.J. Long is the one who unfolds this link. During his visits to the places mentioned in the book, he also goes to the Royal Observatory. Before finding the clock, he does not know whose clock it is or what purpose it has in the text, however, after finding the clock in the collection, he realizes that it was a clock belonged to Captain William, a well-known figure in British history due to his

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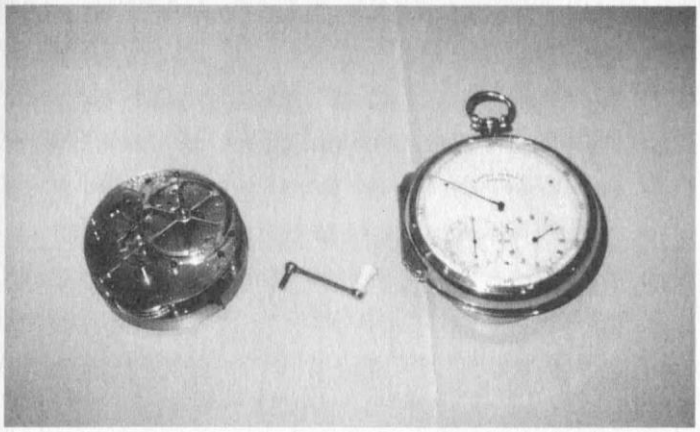
[331] *Ibid*., p.99



former Astronomers Royal, where Austerlitz and I gradually resumed the conversation we had broken off, did a solitary Japanese tourist appear in the doorway. He hovered there for a while before he went all round the octagon once and then quietly vanished again, following the green arrow pointing the way. In this room, which as Austerlitz commented was ideal for its purpose, I was surprised by the simple beauty of the wooden flooring, made of planks of different widths, and by the unusually tall windows, each divided into a hundred and twenty-two lead-framed square glass panes, through which long telescopes were once turned on eclipses of the sun and the moon, on the intersection of the orbits of the stars with the line of the meridian, on the Leonid meteorite showers and the long-tailed comets flying through space. In accordance with his usual custom, Austerlitz took a few photographs, some of them of the snow-white stucco roses in the frieze of flowers running round the ceiling, others of the panorama of the city to the north and northwest on the far side of the park, shot through the leaded windowpanes, and while he was still busy

Figure 3.2.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.99

role in the mutiny on the Bounty in the late 18th century. He says that the clock tells something about Sebald's use of photography and continues:

> the image as it appears in the text, uncaptioned, does not clearly depict how it relates to what is going on elsewhere but of course once you do a little bit of research it transpires, that time piece has an extremely interesting history that its to do with colonial exploitation, to do with resistance again, its tyranny. But its also to do with the curious persistence of objects as bearers of history and cultural memory that outlast human lives and persist across the centuries until they come down to us, now and allow us to reanimate past.[332]

These spaces become prominent, as Jacques Austerlitz travels to Prague, Germany, London and Paris and visits the archives and museums. Sometimes he strolls around the cemeteries and walks through landscapes. **(fig.3.2.2)** Even following Austerlitz's footsteps, the narrator himself takes similar routes. Regarding his visit to London in the late December 1996, he recalls the apprehensiveness:

> just before turning into Liverpool Street Station the train must wind its way over several sets of points through a narrow defile, and where the brick walls rising above both sides of the track with their round arches, columns, niches, blackened with soot and diesel oil.[333]

Likewise, it is after the Nocturama that, in the second day of their first encounter, both figures stroll through the inner city and start talking about marks of pain which continues in a bistro in the Glow Market. A lengthy time of conversation on architecture leads them to the topic of fortifications revolving around marks of pain, again, as well as absolute power. Under the influence of Austerlitz's thoughts about siege craft combined with his

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[332] SOURCE Photographic Review, 2013

[333] Sebald, 2001, p.36

descriptive work in several volumes to a series of essays on such subjects as hygiene and sanitation, the architecture of the penal system, secular temples, hydrotherapy, zoological gardens, departure and arrival, light and shade, steam and gas, and so forth. However, even a first glance at the papers I had brought here from the Institute to Alderney Street showed that they consisted largely of sketches which now seemed misguided, distorted, and of little use. I began to assemble and recast anything that still passed muster in order to re-create before my own eyes, as if in the pages of an album, the picture of the landscape, now almost immersed in oblivion, through which my journey had taken me. But the more I labored on this project over several months the more pitiful did the results seem. I was increasingly overcome by a sense of aversion and distaste, said Austerlitz, at the mere thought of opening the bundles of papers and looking through the endless reams I had written in the course of the years. Yet reading and writing, he

Figure 3.2.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.121

architectural criticism of modernity, the narrator decides to take a walk through Breendonk, the very next day. Thinking of "an image of a star-shaped bastion with walls towering above a precise geometrical ground plan,"[334] he takes a passenger train to Mechelen, and then a bus to the small town of Willebroek where the fort is located. Unexpectedly, he finds "a low-built concrete mass, rounded at all its outer edges and giving the gruesome impression of something hunched and misshapen."[335] Photographs and a map join the textual narrative – as mentioned in the former section – to unite the encounter and the physical excursion and provides the narrator to have a glimpse of the past, experiencing multiple afterlives of the terrain. Even the intertextual references in the text helps Austerlitz, the narrator and the reader even extend the excursion mentally, while implanting factuality into the fiction. For example, together with his extended descriptions, his references to Jean Amery, a Holocaust survivor, and to Claude Simon's *Le Jardin des Plantes* illuminate his footsteps.

By walking through space, his figures – and occasionally readers – roam also through time, and the historical layers of the city. Just like the experience of walking, what Sebald creates is also a literary travel through secondary sources such as photographs, paintings, documents or archival materials. Then travel – rather than a touristic activity – becomes a methodology for both Sebald and Austerlitz to encounter the matter. This distinct mode, which is reciprocal and simultaneous at the same time, provides not only the partial recovery of the past but also the formation of subjecthood by means of interpretation and manipulation.[336] Kimberly Mair explains this phenomenon as an act against language-dominant process. Against the constraining linearity of the field of

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[334] *Ibid*., p.20

[335] *Ibid.*

[336] Hawkins, 2009, p.162

language, in *Austerlitz*, just as the role of the photographs, travel marks the things that cannot be relayed by the linguistic possibilities. **(fig.3.2.3)** Like Austerlitz who switches between German and French in his conversations with the narrator, Sebald also switches between photographic language and architectural language to communicate with the reader. These shifts turn the text into a multilingual one, regarded as an aspect inherent in the experience of the expatriate writer,[337] thus leading Sebald's work to be generalized as travel writing.

For example, in the second day of their first encounter in 1967 summer, the narrator and Austerlitz arrange a meeting on the promenade beside the Schelde. Experiencing the ambiance, a picture painted by Lucas van Valckenborch accompanies their conversation as a secondary source. The painting, which dates back to the end of the sixteenth century, shows the frozen Schelde from the opposite bank and helps Austerlitz animate the scene over and over again in a Barthesian fashion, as he says:

> looking at the river now, thinking of that painting and its tiny figures, I feel as if the moment depicted by Lucas van Valckenborch had never come to an end, as if the canary-yellow lady had only just fallen over or swooned, as if the black velvet hood had only this moment dropped away from her head, as if the little accident, which no doubt goes unnoticed by most viewers, were always happening over and over again, and nothing and no one could ever remedy it.[338]

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[337] Englund, 2014, p.120

[338] Sebald, 2001, p.14

on that long journey, sitting motionless by the window of the compartment, staring out into the dark. I knew nothing about him, not even his name, and I had never exchanged so much as a word with him, but whenever I thought of him I was tormented by the notion that towards the end of the journey he had died of consumption and was stowed in the baggage net with the rest of our belongings. And then, Austerlitz continued, somewhere beyond Frankfurt, when I entered the Rhine valley for the second time in my life, the sight of the Mäuseturm in the part of the river known as the Binger Loch revealed, with absolute certainty, why the tower in Lake Vyrnwy had always seemed to me so uncanny. I could not take my eyes off the great river Rhine flowing sluggishly along in the dusk, the apparently motionless barges lying low in the water, which almost lapped over their decks, the trees and bushes on the other bank, the fine cross-hatching of the vineyards, the stronger transverse lines of the walls supporting the terraces, the slate-gray rocks and ravines leading off sideways into

Figure 3.2.3: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.225

Another example is from their fifth encounter in the late December 1996, just after their visit to the Royal Observatory. It is around three-thirty in the afternoon when they linger around for a while, and then, as they walk down to Greenwich, Austerlitz, calling attention to the park, says that a number of artists painted it in the past centuries:

> Their pictures showed the green lawns and the canopies of the trees, usually with very small, isolated human figures in the foreground, generally ladies in brightly colored hooped skirts carrying parasols, and a few of the white, half-tame deer kept in the park at that time", he says "In the background of these paintings, however, behind the trees and the twin domes of the Royal Navy College, you saw the bend in the river and, like a faint line drawn out, as it were, towards the rim of the world, the city of uncounted souls, an indefinable shape, hunched and gray or plaster-colored, a kind of excrescence or crust on the surface of the earth, and above the city the sky occupying half or more of the entire picture, perhaps with rain hanging down from the clouds in the far distance.[339]

With no need of visual support, he mentions that he saw an example of these kinds of panoramas of Greenwich in one of the dilapidated country houses at the time he was studying at Oxford. What is of particular importance here is that this description, associated with these paintings, leads to an example which has been lost in the destructiveness of the history. Austerlitz tells the narrator that he came across with such houses, which were probably being demolished every two or three days in the 1950s. They became ghosts, as everything had been ripped out from them, such as the bookshelves, the panelling and banisters, the brass central heating pipes and the marble fireplaces. This example, standing in sharp contrast to the monumentality of the public buildings, leads to Iver Grove – a house that stands in the middle of its wilderness of a park. As they go inside and have a long conversation with the householder. **(fig.3.2.4)** As Ashman, the householder, explains, the building

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[339] *Ibid*., pp.102-103

out to be a certain James Mallord Ashman, came towards the house along the western terrace. Fully understanding our interest in the buildings now everywhere falling into decay, he told us during a long conversation that after the family seat had been requisitioned for use as a convalescent home during the war years, the expense of putting it back into any kind of order, however makeshift, had been far beyond his means, so that he had been obliged to move to Grove Farm, which belonged to the estate and lay at the other end of the park, and to work the land himself. Hence, so Ashman told us, said Austerlitz, the sacks of potatoes and the grain on the floor. Iver Grove had been built around 1780 by one of Ashman's ancestors, said Austerlitz, a man who suffered from insomnia and withdrew into the observatory he had built at the top of the house to devote himself to various astronomical studies, particularly selenography or the delineation of the moon, and consequently, as Ashman told us, he had also been in frequent contact with John Russell of Guildford, a miniaturist and artist in pastels famous beyond the frontiers of England, who for several decades at this period was working on a map of the

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Figure 3.2.4: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.104

was requisitioned to be used as a convalescent home during the war years. In rest of the conversation on the history of the building, which also includes an intertextual reference to Turner's *View from Greenwich Park,* Austerlitz feels the sense of displacement by thinking of his own past.

However, it is important to note that the sense of literary travel is created not only through secondary material, but also through layers of movement. To be more clear, Austerlitz and the narrator reveal aspects of travel not only when they are walking or using urban transportation, but also significantly even at times when they are sitting in a hotel bar, or in Austerlitz's house. In those places and times, he and the narrator talk about personal and collective histories, while the significance of travel runs in the background. For example, their sixth encounter is arranged to be in Austerlitz' house in Alderney Street – a quite long way out in the East End of London – almost quarter of a year after their last meeting. Sitting in the living room, Austerlitz continues his story, introducing pieces of his lost past. He says that in order to escape the increasingly tormenting insomnia, he has begun nocturnal wanderings through London which has taken him to the most remote areas of the city:

> For over a year, I think, I would leave my house as darkness fell, walking on and on, down the Mile End Road and Bow Road to Stratford, then to Chigwell and Romford, right across Bethnal Green and Cnonbury, through Holloway and Kentish Town and thus to Hampstead Heath, or else south over the river to Peckham and Dulwich or westward to Richmond Park.[340]

Passing through the stations, he feels the invisible images familiar to him, but he can never put them in their right places. He says that he has had several such experiences in Liverpool Street Station, which soon will appear in the narrative

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[340] *Ibid*., p.126

as the place where his childhood journey, *Kindertransport*, ended. Giving historical background, Austerlitz says:

> whenever I was in the station, I kept almost obsessively trying to imagine – through the ever-changing maze of walls – the location in that huge space of rooms where the asylum inmates were confined, and I often wondered whether the pain and suffering accumulated on this site over the centuries had ever really ebbed away; or whether they might not still, as I sometimes thought when I felt a cold breath of air on my forehead, be sensed as we passed through them.[341]

The next day, Austerlitz continues with another memory about his second visit to the state archives building in the Karmelitska. Mentioning the photographs of the great inner court and the stairway leading up to the galleries that he has taken, he explains that these asymmetrical constructions remind him of the follies built by many English noblemen in their parks and gardens.

Besides its different characteristics, what travel provides according to Kimberly Mair, is a sensorial consciousness:

> the experience of studying the form of discreet objects – such as the curve of banisters on a staircase, the moulding of a stone arch over a gateway, the tangled precision of the blades in a tussock of dried grass – is tied to the subject's conscious relationship to the surrounding environment.

Mair explains that the senses play an imperative role in the understanding of the built environment and that the various senses cannot be experienced in isolation from each other. As the inter-subjective realm of language, which offers an illusory impression of totality, poses representational problems for those sensorial experiences, the concept of emplacement becomes important.[342]

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[341] *Ibid.*, p.130

[342] Mair, 2007, pp.234-235

According to David Howes, emplacement, which deals with the multi-sensory existence in relation to the mind, the body and the environment, invites consideration of the ways including multiple perceptions as well as the physical and symbolic dimensions of the built environment. This means;

> for the subject, the urban environment is constituted by the relational and textured distribution of inhabitable, bureaucratic and monumental structures; green spaces, town squares; and rights of transport such as sidewalks, bike trails, roads, railways and tram lines.[343]

The protagonist experiences such multiple perception in Seminar Garden as well as Estates Theater in Prague. The details of the stories come forward in the sixth encounter – late winter of 1997 – of the narrator with Austerlitz in Alderney Street. Austerlitz recounts his own search through the years of Agata and finding Vera. As he continues with the third day in Prague, he mentions of the Seminar Garden:

> The cherry and pear trees of Vera's story had now been grubbed up and replaced by some time yet to come" he recalls. "The path wound uphill, describing wide curves through the grass, which was wet with dew… Then I set on a bench in the sun until nearly midday, looking out over the buildings of the Lesser Qurter and the river Vltava at the panaroma of the city, which seemed to be veined with the curving cracks and rifts of past time, like the varnish on a painting.[344]

Another characteristic of travel in *Austerlitz* is that Sebald's journeys through cultural history never end up with returning home or reaching the final destination. As Bianca Thesien emphasizes, for Sebald to return to home or to return to an origin is a highly staged event which is "supersemantic moment of

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[343] Cited in *Ibid*., p.236

[344] Sebald, 2001, p.162

reappropriation or of coming into one's own." So these events end up every time in new locations, in museums, libraries, etc.[345]

One of the several examples is obviously Austerlitz's movement through Prague, where his passage through the city's alleys and courtyards are tied to the production of knowledge about his past. Mair indicates that the production of knowledge is through his immersion in the "scenes" of his early life where the scene stands for not only the visual but also for inter-sensorial encounter. After learning her mother's registered address at the state archive, he is headed to the Lesser Quarter which is ten minutes' walk away from the archive. He describes his feelings as he walks through the labyrinth of alleyways, thoroughfares and courtyards between the Vlasska and Nerudova as follows;

> Still more so when I felt the uneven paving of the Sporkova underfoot as step by step I climbed uphill, it was as if I had already been this way before and memories were revealing themselves to me not by means of any mental effort but through my senses, so long numbed and now coming back to life.[346]

Though he does not remember anything for certain, he stops constantly because his attention is caught by small details such as finely wrought window grating, the iron handle of a bell pull, or the branches of an almond tree growing over a garden wall. As he enters the front hall of Number 12 Sporkova, where his mother Agata lived before she was ghettoized, he sees the metal box for the electrics built into the wall beside the entrance with its lightning symbol and the octofoil mosaic flower in shades of dove gray and snow white set in the flecked artificial-stone floor of the hall. **(fig.3.2.5)** He smells the damp lime wash while gently climbing up stairs and he feels the hazelnut-shaped iron

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[345] Bianca Theisen, "Prose of the World: W.G. Sebald's Literary Travels", *The Germanic Review*, 79.3 (2004), p.172

[346] Sebald, 2001, p.150

stood for a considerable time outside the vaulted entrance to a building, said Austerlitz, looking up at a half-relief set in the smooth plaster above the keystone of the arch. The cast was no more than a square foot in size, and showed, set against a spangled sea-green background, a blue dog carrying a small branch in its mouth, which I could tell, by the prickling of my scalp, it had brought back out of my past. Then there was the cool air as I entered the front hall of Number 12 Šporkova, the metal box for the electrics built into the wall beside the entrance with its lightning symbol, the octofoil mosaic flower in shades of dove gray and snow white set in the flecked artificial-stone floor of the hall, the smell of damp limewash, the gently rising flight of stairs, with hazelnut-shaped iron knobs placed at intervals in the handrail of

the banisters—all of them signs and characters from the type case of forgotten things, I thought, and was overcome by such a state of blissful yet anxious confusion that more than once I had to sit down on the steps in the quiet stairwell and lean my head against the wall. It may have been as much as an hour before I finally rang the bell of the right-hand flat on the top floor, and then

Figure 3.2.5: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.151

knobs placed at intervals in the handrail of the banisters. They all seem to Austerlitz, who is in a hypnotic state of feeling anxious yet blissful, very important as signs and characters signifying forgotten things. There are two reproduced photographs one belonging to the mosaic, and the other to banisters. They can be interpreted as the visualization of the things mentioned by Austerlitz, however, there is no proof that they belong to the number 12, Sporkova. Rather they demonstrate "family resemblances" as the term Benjamin proposed years ago. The mosaic yet stands for the star-shaped fortress as a reference to its reproduced plan which has been introduced in the previous pages of the book. Furthermore, it bonds two images in a dialectical sense, announcing his family's disappearance into the monstrous bulk of ghetto.

The other example is from their seventh encounter which is in September 1997, after Austerlitz's moving to Paris. The narrator meets him in the Le Havane bistro bar on the boulevard Auguste Blanqui – not far from the Glaciere Metro station. Austerlitz's tale continues this time from the 1950s when he was first in Paris. In the search of his father's footsteps, he rents a place in the Thirteenth Arrondissement, since his father Maximilian Aychenwald's last known address was on the rue Barrault. However, his inquiries for finding his irrevocably disappeared father were fruitless due to personal reasons as well as lack of official information. So his expedition becomes aimless wanderings leading away from the boulevard Auguste Blanqui up to the place d'Italie on one side and back down to the Glaciere on the other. Yet, he constantly imagines;

> whether he [i.e. Austerlitz's father] had been interned in the half-built housing estate out at Drancy after the first police raid in Paris in August 1941, or not until July of the following year, when a whole army of French gendarmes took thirteen thousand of their Jewish fellow citizens from their homes, in what was called the grande rafle, during which over a hundred of their victims jumped

> out of the windows in desperation or found some other way of committing suicide.[347]

The important point here is that Austerlitz tries to animate histories perishing into each other. But in terms of architectural history, what is perhaps more important is that he is seized by these kinds of ideas in specific places/spaces. These are the kind of places/spaces that have more of the past about them than of the present. For instance, he says:

> if I am walking through the city and look into one of those quite courtyards where nothing has changed for 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 given 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?[348]

He lingers around the gravestones erected in a vaguely segregated part in memory of the members of the Woelfflin, Wormser, Mayerbeer, Ginsberg, Franck and many other Jewish families, in the Cimetiere de Montparnasse, laid out by the Hospitalers in the seventeenth century. As the hidden histories are always in sight yet buried and needs a careful eye, Austerlitz discusses how the change dominates time while revealing afterlife of the cemetery in connection to its physical environment. As he expresses, the land belongs to the Hotel de Dieu, yet now it is surrounded by towering office blocks. This situation of being wedged in helps understand Austerlitz's point, by means of creating an

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[347] *Ibid*., p.257

[348] *Ibid*., pp.257-258

image, in which past and present coexist physically and metaphorically. Thus the reproduced black and white photograph with high contrast becomes a proof of this situation – rather than a visualization of the cemetery. In fact, the light diminishes the gravestone to an abstract quality by blurring the details – due to the camera angle which contains a gravestone in the foreground and high modern building in the background.

In *Austerlitz*, both in the spatial practices and in the sensual perceptions of the city, the built environment is not reflected from a bird's eye view, but rather from the perspective of walking through which physical relationship is established on the eye-level. So it helps Austerlitz to conceive the monstrous scale of destruction at first hand. As the static descriptions are not sufficient to understand this aspect, textual narrative is woven with photographs, and moreover, the act of moving is integrated to the verbal narrative in order to provide a sensual perception. This is quite visible in the example of Bibliotèque Nationale, as elucidated by Austerlitz while sitting in Brasserie Le Havane, where he meets with the narrator for the eight time in their gradual timeline in late 1997. After an extensive account focusing on the past and the present of the building and its surroundings, Austerlitz comments on the notion of access to the area. He says, as the narrator quotes:

> In order to reach the Grande Bibliotheque you have to travel through a desolate no-man's-land in one of those robot-driven Metro trains steered by a ghostly voice, or alternatively you have to catch a bus in the place Valhubert and then walk along the wind-swept riverbank towards the hideous outsize building, the monumental dimensions of which were evidently inspired by the late President's wish to perpetuate his memory whilst, perhaps because it had to serve this purpose, it was so conceived that it is, as I realized on my first visit, both in its outer appearance and inner constitution unwelcoming if not inimical to human beings, and runs counter, on principle, one might say, to the requirements of any true reader. If you approach the new Bibliotheque Nationale from the place Valhubert you find yourself at the foot of a flight of steps

> which, made out of countless grooved hardwood boards and measuring three hundred by a hundred and fifty meters, surrounds the entire complex on the two sides facing the street like the lower story of a ziggurat. Once you have climbed the steps, at least four dozen in number and as closely set as they are steep, a venture not entirely without its dangers even for younger visitors, you are standing on an esplanade which positively overwhelms the eye, built for the same grooved wood as the steps, and extending over an area about the size of nine football pitches between the four corner towers of the library which thrust their way twenty-two floors up into ate air. You might think, especially on days when the wind drives rain over this totally exposed platform, as it quite often does, that by some mistake you had found your way to the deck of the Berengaria or one of the other oceangoing giants, and you would be not in the least surprised if, to the sound of a wailing foghorn, the horizon of the city of Paris suddenly began rising and falling against the gauge of the towers as the great steamer pounded onwards through mountainous waves, or if one of the tiny figures, having unwisely ventured on deck, were swept over the rail by a gust of wind and carried far out into the wastes of the Atlantic waters. The four glazed towers themselves, named in the manner reminiscent of a futuristic novel La tour des lois, La tour des temps, La tour des nombres and La tour des lettres, make a positively Babylonian impression on anyone who looks up at their façades and wonders about the still largely empty space behind their closed blinds.[349]

On the other hand, reflecting on geographical and social situatedness which is directly linked to the practice of inhibiting a space, Sebald -through his character Austerlitz- articulates the role of culture in shaping the way in which subjects experience the sensory. In this way, he opens a path to interrogate strict distinctions between what is conventionally recognized as reality and illusion.[350] Moreover, conventional notions of time and space – regarded as distinct planes or axes – are put into question. As Mair remarks in relation to Austerlitz's nocturnal wanderings in London, the past marks the present

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[349] *Ibid*., pp.275-278

[350] Mair, 2007, p.236

"where the city's roads, by virtue of their being document the passage of many others before so that it is almost impossible to walk upon them without imagining the invisible footprints they hold."[351] As an outcome of intertwined afterlives, these places are the past itself, yet becoming the past of the present, in Benjaminian understanding. So, Austerlitz's wandering do not mean only a geographical excursion but also a type travelling that goes back in time, following an incomplete quest for his erased childhood.[352]

All in all, in the service of Sebald's selective strategies, the act of walking as reported through verbal and visual materials - photographs, maps and tickets etc. – becomes an act of writing and learning.[353] Concentrating on the decay of sites and loss, this act becomes an alternative way to present and represent the historiography of cultural, geographical and historical events by showing that these trips are not arbitrary.[354] In this way, even encounters are arranged through an invisible matrix of neglected and forgotten stories and in the end create a greater matrix that requires the analysis of a critical reader. **(fig.3.2.6)**

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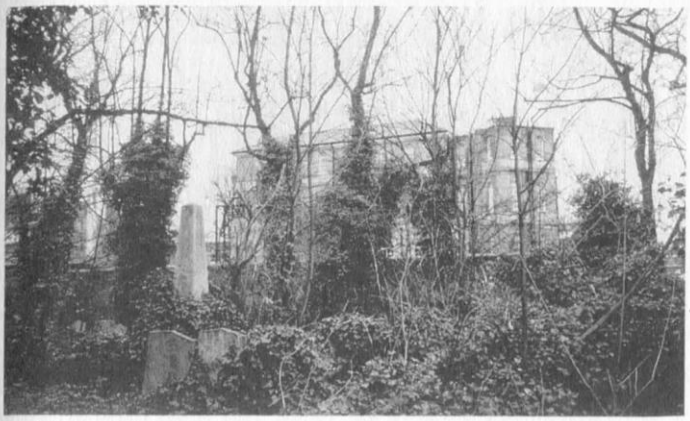
[351] *Ibid*., p.238

[352] Lee, 2012, p.122

[353] Gray Kochhar Lindgren, "Charcoal: The Phantom Traces of W.G. Sebald's Novel-Memoirs", *Monatshefte*, 94.3 (2002), p.373

[354] Daniel Weston, "The Spatial Supplement: Landscape and Perspective in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*", *Cultural Geographies*, 18.2 (2011), p.181

moment when, just as he was about to fix a slate in place, something that had been stretched too taut inside him snapped at a



particular spot behind his forehead, and for the first time he heard, coming over the crackling transistor wedged into the batten in front of him, the voices of those bearers of bad tidings which had haunted him ever since. While I was there I also thought quite often of Elias the minister lapsing into madness, and of the stone-built asylum in Denbigh where he died. But I found it impossible to think of myself, my own history, or my present state of mind. I was not discharged until the beginning of April, a year after returning from Prague. The last doctor whom I saw at the hospital advised me to look for some kind of light physical occupation, perhaps in horticulture, she suggested, and so for the next two years, at the time of day when office staff are pouring into the City, I went out the other way to Romford and my new place of work, a council-run nursery garden on the outskirts of a large park which employed, as well as the trained gardeners, a certain

Figure 3.2.6: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.231

3.3 Archive

In *Austerlitz*, in an attempt to find new ways to represent complex relations within history, Sebald employs many methods whether textual or visual. Through the combination of the two, considerable amount of archival research is introduced. In that sense, Sebald's entire work can be considered a self-conscious examination of the problem of how to tell the story of the past – another's past – without lapsing into sentimentality or distorting any comprehension of the past altogether.[355]

Here, the issue of archive is of particular importance. Rather than signifying what is evidential and scientific in the conventional sense, it presents an alternative approach to history in terms of method and outcome. The archive, which is recognized as a repository of memory, and particularly, the lost or hardly recoverable collective memory, has a counter-historical function in *Austerlitz*, and even in the other works of Sebald. By creating a rich labyrinthine content methodologically and by shifting the referential system, Sebald just like in photography and travel, manages to blur the line between fact and fiction. Catalina Botez explains this attempt as a way to postpone arrival to a clear and definite destination. "They make use of postponement techniques" she says, "that defeat the initially stated purpose (to elucidate and help preserve historic truth), and therefore perpetuate a contradiction that undermines the meaning of their own existence."[356] On the other hand, from a skeptical perspective, the archive reveals its contradictory content, which works as a forgetting agent due to its capacity to consume and destroy memory, although amassing information. This situation again leads to the concept of

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[355] Harris, 2001, p.381

[356] Botez, 2011, p.155

post-memory which, as Botez explains by referring to Aleida Assmann, creates a meta-memory, a second-order memory preserving what has been forgotten. It is due to the incompleteness of the embodied communicative memory and institutionalized cultural/archival memory; so it creates a situation of unreliability which is precisely what Sebald seems to suggest via his character Austerlitz. As Botez note:

> No matter how long he searches through the European archives, the knowledge he gains about his long lost parents is minimal and inconclusive. And rather than shedding some light on their destinies and current whereabouts, the archives only deepen his anxieties.[357]

Then one can ask how a document of something lived and experienced can be incomplete, as this is the first-hand record of the fact. In an essay on Auschwitz survivors Jean Amery and Primo Levi, Sebald explains this point very clearly. He says, as quoted by Mark M. Anderson, that even the direct witnesses of Nazi crimes cannot give a "true understanding" of their experience, just because the original memory trace is too disturbed. In this sense, there is no "pure" historical document. So in order to permeate historical facts, Sebald believes that in addition to photographs, archival material should also be translated through a writing process which turns the "chaotic, pre-linguistic trace within the mind's recording faculty into an ordered, discursive recollection that distorts and betrays its truth content in the very act of mediation."[358] This writing process exposes the cracks in the documentary surface, acknowledging the gaps in the narrative, and therefore, calls attention to the fictional process itself. As media and media translation do not create experience by restoring content, Anita McChesney points out that the

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[357] *Ibid.*

[358] Anderson, 2008, p.147

significance is the transfer of the media itself which alters the form of the experience as well as each medium in the process.[359] In that sense, while Austerlitz uses sensual evidence of objects and tangible trace of photographs by means of temporalities of media against the voids in materiality of language, the narrator helps the process by playing an active role rather than simply being a passive listener. Although conveying ideas as a passive listener provides a critical distance, feeling the necessity to indicate laborious and painful process of recollection completes the transformation process. Silke Arnold-de Simine interprets this approach as a method of secondary witnessing where the narrator acquires a self-conscious documentation through recording his own memories and feelings.[360]

Not only personal memories but also the buried past are triggered through historical reminders, geographical prompts, objects that act as enigmatic repositories such as column capitals, desolate objects in museums, and through stories heard in radio, books, tickets, film footages etc., which altogether form media. **(fig.3.3.1)** Media in McLuhan's conception, contains all forms of technology that are extensions of our bodies, as Anita McChesney points out, and allow these to be translated into information systems. This broad definition includes spoken and written words; text of all types; material structures, such as roads and cities; mechanical and electrical technology, from bicycles and cars to telephones, television, and films; also cultural inventions such as money, clothing and clocks which ultimately allow evoking and retrieving the world at

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[359] Anita McChesney, "On the Repeating History of Destruction: Media and the Observer in Sebald and Ransmayr", *MLN*, 121.3 (2006), p.705. *Project MUSE*. Web. 14 Jan. 2015

[360] Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p.25

only by a few days, in which latter case, on account of the extreme psychopathic personality changes which they had undergone and which generally resulted in a kind of infantilism divorcing them from reality and entailing an almost total loss of the ability to speak and act, they were immediately sectioned in the casemate of the Cavalier Barracks, which served as a psychiatric ward and where they usually perished within a week under the dreadful conditions prevailing there, so that although there was no shortage of doctors and surgeons in Theresienstadt who cared for their fellow prisoners as well as they could, and in spite of the steam disinfection boiler installed in the malting kiln of the former brewery, the hydrogen cyanide chamber, and other hygienic measures introduced by the Kommandantur in an all-out campaign against infestation with lice, the number of the dead—entirely in line, said Austerlitz, with the intentions of the masters of the ghetto—rose to well above twenty thousand in the ten months between August 1942 and May 1943 alone, as a result of which the joiner's workshop in the former riding school could no

Figure 3.3.1: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.240

an instant.[361] Similarly, Sebald's *Austerlitz* – using a different kind of media – explores their mediating capacities to relive things observed but not experienced or experienced but not remembered, since he sees these memory objects not as "remains of a lost past but material hinges of a potential recovery of shared meanings by means of narrativization and performativity." [362] Considering that the enigmatic objects cannot tell their stories – sharing the silence of photographs – they need to be mediated, in other words, they need to be read. Arnold- Simine connects this "reading" attempt directly to the German version of *Austerlitz*, where etymologically it means "gathering" or "collecting". This is the case, for example, in Austerlitz's investigation in Teresienstadt where he stumbles across a kind of junk shop called Antikos Bazar. The displayed objects are frozen images of arbitrary collections which seem to exist beyond time and space. As she suggests, Austerlitz responds to the shop-windows as if they were vitrines in a museum, and as if the objects and their relation to one another could provide him with answers about what happened in the Theresienstadt ghetto.[363] **(fig.3.3.2)**

Thinking of the time concept, Austerlitz finds out the best possible answer in an approach in which "the river is never rising from any source and never flowing into any sea but always back into itself." So the objects become timeless at the moment of rescue, being perpetuated but forever just occurring.[364] In addition to these elegiac objects, a stamp from Theresienstadt, also visually reproduced, but textually untold, marks the threshold between

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[361] McChesney, 2006, p.707

[362] Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p.17

[363] *Ibid*., p.28

[364] Sebald, 2001, p.196

illusion and reality, as Lynn Wolff notes, leaving the reader to look outside the text for the full historical context.[365] While being reminiscent of neglected, unheard histories, these kinds of objects stand as reminders of absence and loss rather than meaning and continuity.

Not only the Antikos Bazar but also the Ghetto Museum appear in his expedition of Theresienstadt. Strolling around the museum an studying the exhibited maps, Austerlitz again falls into the archival materials and gets a faint idea of the persecution. These maps of the Greater German Reich and its protectorates cause him a great sense of blank spaces, despite his well-developed sense of topography. He continues with examining railway lines running through them together with excessive amount of documentation recording the population policy of the National Socialists, and evidencing "their mania for order and purity, which was put into practice on a vast scale through measures partly improvised, partly devised with obsessive organizational zeal." He is confronted with incontrovertible proof of the setting up a forced-labor system throughout Central Europe and learns about deliberate wastage and discard of the work slaves, the origins and places of death of the victims, the routes by which they were taken to what destinations, what names they had borne in life and what they and their guards looked like. Moreover, he sees pieces of luggage brought to Terezin by the internees from Prague and Pilsen, Würzburg and Vienna, Kufstein and Karlsbad and countless other places:

> "the items such as handbags, belt buckles, clothes brushes, and combs which they had made in the various workshops; meticulously worked out projects and production plans for the agricultural exploitation of the open areas behind the ramparts and

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[365] Lynn L. Wolff, "H.G. Adler and W.G. Sebald: From History and Literature to Literature as Historiography", *Monatshefte*, 103.2 (2011), p.267

> on the glacis and balance sheets, registers of the dead, lists of every imaginable kind, and endless rows of numbers and figures."[366]

Indeed all of them reassure the administrators that nothing ever escaped their notice. But beside this detailed account of the history of persecution, the archive gains more importance in terms of architectural history, because Austerlitz associates this segment of time and space he experienced with the ghetto's own pre-histories. He tries to conjure it up with its spatial and historical characteristics.

Since the textual medium alone is incapable of recording the sense of destruction and, as mentioned before, since it cannot communicate the extent of the sensory experience, written language interacting with secondary sources is employed as a medium of the destruction process where writing erases the meaningful content. Then the collection of curiosities creates a contrast to the structured approach of a modern history museum. Yet searching for intermediality, Arnold-de Simine suggests that Sebald's text itself creates a memory museum while comparing Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum to Sebald's *Austerlitz* in terms of spatial and metaphorical aspects. For her, memory museum does not have to denote a building; rather, as she quotes from Susan Sontag, it is a way of thinking about, and mourning for the destruction of European Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s. Paul Williams, on the other hand, interprets it as a specific kind of museum dedicated to a historical event by commemorating mass suffering of some kind. [367] According to these descriptions, what *Austerlitz* suggests as a whole is a multi-perspective framework of destructive events, which refrains from making a direct appeal of Holocoust iconography.

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[366] Sebald, 2001, pp.198-199

[367] Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p.25

ware jugs, the tin advertising sign bearing the words *Theresienstädter Wasser,* the little box of seashells, the miniature barrel organ, the globe-shaped paperweights with wonderful marine flowers swaying inside their glassy spheres, the model ship (some kind of corvette under full sail), the oakleaf-embroidered jacket of light, pale, summery linen, the staghorn buttons, the outsize Russian officer's cap and the olive-green uniform tunic with gilt epaulettes that went with it, the fishing rod, the hunter's bag, the Japanese fan, the endless landscape painted round a lampshade in fine brushstrokes, showing a river running quietly through perhaps Bohemia or perhaps Brazil? And then there was the stuffed squirrel, already moth-eaten here and there, perched on the stump of a branch in a showcase the size of a shoebox, which had its beady button eye implacably fixed on me, and whose Czech name—*veverka*—I now recalled like the name of a long-lost friend. What, I asked myself, said Austerlitz, might be the significance of the river never rising from any source, never flowing out into any sea but always back into itself, what was the meaning of

Figure 3.3.2: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.196

In addition to the act of moving that enables Austerlitz to experience history sensorily, the act of reading provides him to gain access to his and other's pasts materially. Related examples can be seen in Teresienstadt, Breendonk and Bibliothèque Nationale sections, where Sebald challenges the nineteenth century ideal of historiography to represent the past "as it was". Austerlitz, being blinded by the excessive amount of documentation at the museum, placed in the Theresienstadt ghetto, obtains a general idea of persecution during the Holocoust. Yet, as it is not sufficient to develop this initial fragmentary information by means of traveling to Theresienstadt, he delves into Adler's historical and sociological account of Theresienstadt, which he wrote between 1945 and 1947 under the most difficult circumstances, partly in Prague and partly in London. It is important to note that, although Austerlitz mentions reading Adler, in the textual narrative, the parts from the book are not registered within quotations. It seems as if Austerlitz was the one who reveals those stories by blurring the archival solidity of the document itself. For several pages, long sentences follow each other creating a vision that cannot be imagined by visiting the fortified town. Though he is not able to find any real trace of his mother, whom he knew was deported east along with 1500 other "actors" in September of 1944, he gets familiarized with the various aspects of Theresienstadt, such as social life including the occupations of the inhabitants and the various jobs they carried out in there. Closely connected to the presentation of visual material in the novel, as mentioned in image-text relationship before, Sebald reproduces a long list of jobs in a full page, which helps to mediate the document by means of obscuring its direct meanings. This method is not only for providing the reader's relationship to the text but also for showing Austerlitz's own slow progress in imagining the past due to his limited knowledge of German. In this process, Austerlitz tries to decipher this secondary source syllable by syllable, and then, tries to determine the meaning of a word, followed by situating it word within the sentence and sentence

within the text, which as a whole reveals a historiographical precision in handling the material. Moreover, Lynn Wolff claims that through the reproduction of the page from Adler's text, while the narrative provides a "reflection" of the image, the image demonstrates and demands different modes of reading. According to Wolff, it is mimetic as it besets not only reflection but also presentation and representation:

> Exemplifying the complex, simultaneous anticipatory and retrospective relationship of image to text that one finds across Sebald's works, the image here – a reproduced page from a documentary text – at one and the same time both precedes and parallels the narrative. Its insertion in the body of the text faces the narration for which it actually provided the basis.[368]

In addition to Wolff's view, Dora Osborne touches upon the intextual characteristic of Adler's text, which is also placed as a form of visual authentication in *Austerlitz*. She says that without direct citations, the mixed style of paraphrasing also reflects Adler's own distanced tone in Sebald's work, "thereby extending Sebald's periscopic writing by yet another dimension of emotional removal."[369]

Using referential sources is not the only characteristic of Austerlitz. Just like in the case of travel, the narrator also benefits from secondary material to complete the general vision. In the last section of the book, the narrator decides to visit Breendonk once again. After spending some time in the buildings there, he sits beside the moat surrounding the fortress and begins to read Dan Jacobson's *Heshel's Kingdom*, which Austerlitz gave him in their first meeting in Paris. The book describes the author's search for his grandfather Rabbi

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[368] Wolff, 2011, p.265

[369] Dora Osborne "Austerlitz", *germanlit.org.* Ernest Schonfield, 6 Jun. 2014. Web. 24 Apr 2014 < https://sites.google.com/site/germanliterature/20th-century/sebald/austerlitz >

Yisrael Yehoshua Melamed, known as Heshel. Just like Austerlitz, Jacobson goes after Heshel's traces through Lithuania, yet he is unable to find any. As the narrator quotes Jacobson:

> Russians built a ring of twelve fortresses around it in the late nineteenth century, which then in 1914, despite the elevated positions on which they had been constructed, and for all the great number of their cannon, the thickness of their walls, and their cannon, the thickness of their walls, and their labyrinthine corridors, proved entirely useless. Some of the forts, fell into disrepair later; others served the Lithuanians and then the Russian once more as prisons. In 1941 they fell into German hands, including the notorious Fort IX where Whermacht command posts were set up and where more than thirty thousand people were killed over the next three years. Their remains, lie under a field of oats a hundred meters outside the walls. Transports from the west kempt coming to Kaunas until May 1944, when the war had long since been lost, as the last messages from those locked in dungeons of the fortress bear witness.[370]

Reaching these kinds of documents, while tracing a fictional character, Austerlitz's mother Agata, Austerlitz tries to find an image of his mother probably for proving himself her existence in a Barthesian sense, rather than accessing to a numerical date, which indeed does not make any sense. It is actually a Nazi propaganda film – shown as excerpts in the Ghetto museum[371] – that triggers his struggle to find her. As Martin Moddlinger explains, the propaganda film – known as *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* – and/or the archive of Theresienstadt enables Austerlitz to form some kind of connection with his long lost mother, who was interned in Theresienstadt."Even if the space of the ghetto today holds nothing of her, no physical proof of her fate," Moddlinger continues, "then at least the space of

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[370] Sebald, 2001, p.298

[371] Elcott, 2004, p.212

photography and film might contain trace of her life." Therefore, documentation acts not as a culmination point, but rather as a tool to come to terms with the past, in working with history.[372] After watching the film in one of the video viewing rooms of the museum without getting any tangible result, Austerlitz decides to have a slow-motion copy of the fragment from Theresienstadt which lasts an hour. As Austerlitz holds the duplicated documentary – but not his mother's image – in his hands, he rips the physical, meaning historical features, out of it in order to reach what is visible and what is not. He then manages to obtain a cassette copy of it from the Imperial War Museum – through Federal Archives in Berlin. After watching it over and over again, "Once the scant document, was extended to four times its original length," says Austerlitz, "it did reveal previously hidden objects and people, creating, by default as it were, a different sort of film altogether."[373] While describing the content of the film, Austerlitz also draws attention to the defects probably caused by the dated filmstrip:

> The many damaged sections of the tape, which I had hardly noticed before, now melted the image from its center or from the edges, blotting it out and instead making patterns of bright white sprinkled with black which reminded me of aerial photographs taken in the far north, or a drop of water seen under the microscope.[374] **(fig.3.3.3)**

It also changes the voices and sounds uncannily by transforming polka music into a funeral march in a grotesque sluggish pace, causing undistinguishable commentaries, and making human voice descend into most nightmarish depths. In the haunted space of history, Austerlitz catches many details while watching

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[372] Modlinger, 2012, p.346

[373] Sebald, 2001, p.247

[374] *Ibid*., p.249

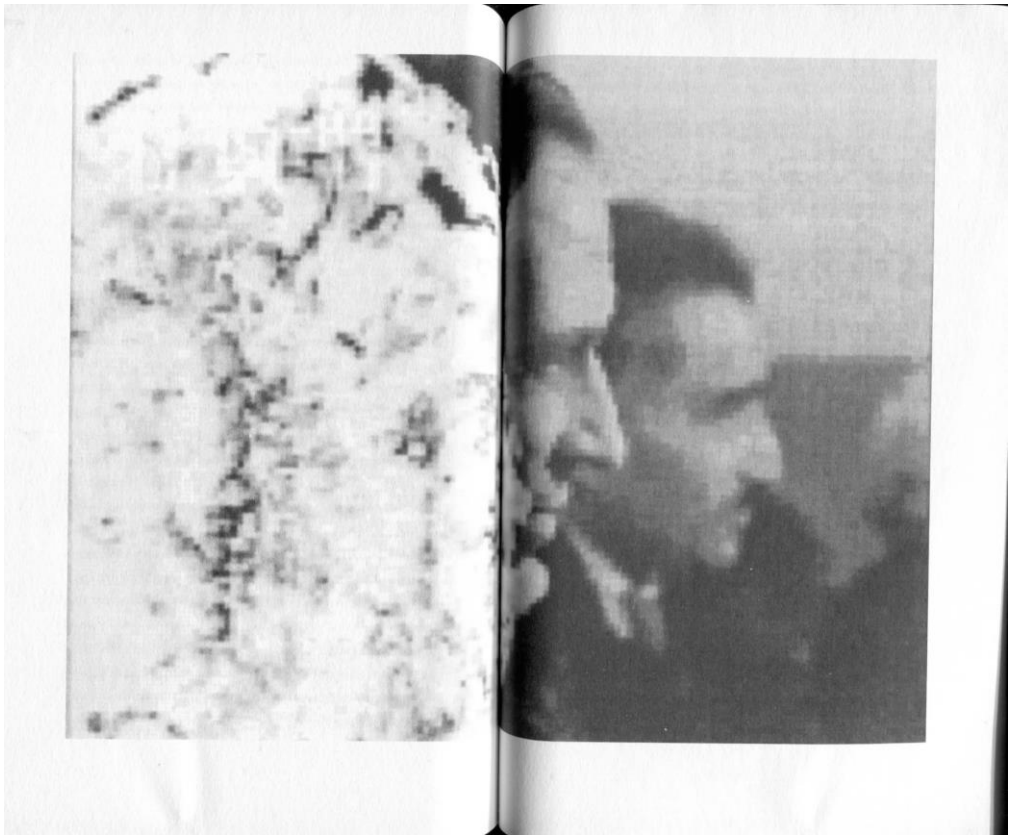
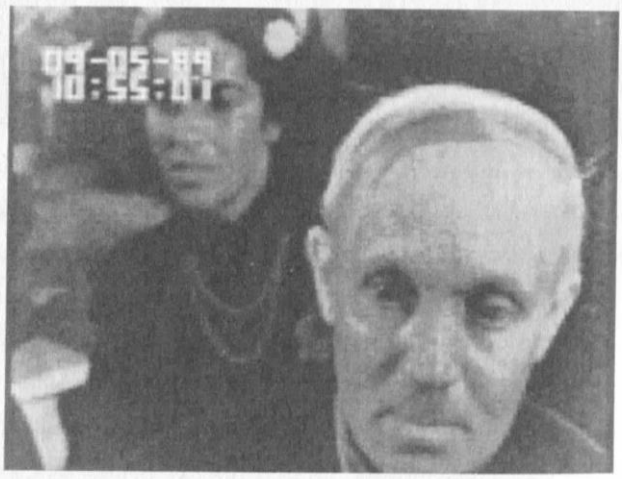


Figure 3.3.3: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), pp.248-249

the film again, populated by ghostlike figures, slow, sad, and tired images of the living dead. Moreover, he recognizes details such as Pavel Haas's study or the pseudo-Tyrolean type of chairs used in some sort of hall for the performance or an old gentleman with cropped gray head. Yet he discovers another detail: "Set a little way back and close to the upper edge of the frame, the face of a young woman appears," he says and continues:

> barely emerging from the black shadows around it, which is why I did not notice it at all at first. Around her neck, she is wearing a three-stringed and delicately draped necklace which scarcely stands

shapes sawn out of their backs. In the course of the performance the camera lingers in close-up over several members of the audience, including an old gentleman whose cropped gray head fills the right-hand side of the picture, while at the left-hand side, set a little way back and close to the upper edge of the frame, the face of a young woman appears, barely emerging from the black shadows around it, which is why I did not notice it at all at first. Around her neck, said Austerlitz, she is wearing a three-stringed and delicately draped necklace which scarcely stands out from her dark, high-necked dress, and there is, I think, a white flower in her hair. She looks, so I tell myself as I watch, just as I imagined the singer Agáta from my faint memories and the few other clues to her appearance that I now have, and I gaze and gaze again at that face, which seems to me both strange and familiar, said Austerlitz, I run the tape back repeatedly, looking at the time in-



dicator in the top left-hand corner of the screen, where the figures covering part of her forehead show the minutes and seconds,

Figure 3.3.4: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.251

> out from her dark, high-necked dress, and there is, I think, a white flower in her hair.[375] **(fig.3.3.4)**

What is produced here is a sublime or ecstatic movement out of the space between the frame's two edges, as Verdolini explains: "The first one is the edge that limits the image, crops and contains the representation and the second one is the edge that – precisely by virtue of that same limitation – holds off the profane world, promises an infinite simulacral representability."[376] Therefore, the image begins to detach from the frame and gains a photographic quality, whereas the hermetic seal remains visible inside and nothingness ruptures and becomes mediated through it.

Besides, it is not the only film that has been worked through in *Austerlitz*. Unlike the Theresienstadt film, films by Alain Resnais, which are mentioned in accordance with the old and new Bibliothèque Nationale, are significant for their roles in situating past and present within the "theme of traumatic memory."[377] Austerlitz mentions Resnais's *Toute la Memorie du Monde* (1956), a short documentary about the old Bibliothèque Nationale, which in turn alludes to Resnais's earlier film *Nuit et Brouillard* (1955) about the Nazi concentration camps, where Resnais lets the images of past and present blend into each other.[378] Besides, Austerlitz, in his commentary, also considers the building's spatial and functional features:

> I was watching a short black and white film about the Bibliotheque Nationale and saw messages racing by pneumatic post from the

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[375] *Ibid*., p.251

[376] Verdolini, 2013, p.625

[377] Modlinger, 2012, p.350

[378] *Ibid.*

> reading rooms to the stacks along what might be described as the library's nervous system, it struck me that the scholars, together with the whole apparatus of the library, formed an immensely comlex and constantly evolving creature which had to be fed with myriads of words, in order to bring forth myriads of words in its own turn.[379]

On the other hand, Austerlitz also uses textual archives which are based on Sebald's own archival experience. James L. Cowan indicates that two articles appeared in the public press just after the opening of the Bibliothèque Nationale in December 1996. These are the most probable sources which Sebald uses for the narrative of the fictional character Henri Lemoine. The articles are important both for their archival status and for their emphasis on the connection between the new library and the virtually unknown camp revealing the afterlife of the site and its silent history.[380] Cowan explains that while transforming the *Zeit* article into Henri Lemoine report;

> Sebald created an artfully composed, tightly ordered, and carefully paced statement. Throughout, he maintains an informal but matter-of-fact tone whose very understatement intensifies its rhetorical impact. He keeps references to individuals out of his text, focusing on the perpetrators of the M-Akiton, the operation of the camp, and those who exploited both. The deportations and deportees are mentioned only indirectly; and the one case where a former internee is cited turns out to be fictitious, an invention of Sebald's.[381]

So with a variety of strategies, Sebald manages to transform the eight-page journalistic report into a ten-sentence account, where he excludes many details yet adds his own notes in order to ensure rhetorical points. For example, as

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[379] Sebald, 2001, p.261

[380] Cowan, 2009, p.199

[381] *Ibid*., p.200

Cowan also points out, Sebald prefers to omit the exact address of the camp, and even, he shifts the boundary of the area from the Rue Watt (south of the Rue Tolbiac) to the Gare d'Austerlitz (to the north) by means of changing the location of the camp from the "immediate vicinity" of the library to the site of the library itself.[382] Thus literally and figuratively he puts the gigantic library in a state that offers a powerful image for the burial of the past. Similarly, he excludes some statistical material, while transforming formal report into an informal conversation. He deliberately uses rough estimations such as "an army of no fewer than" to express the number of workers, which in the end only retains the sense of the scope. Moreover, he prefers not to mention fire-bombing, which helps him to obscure the fate of the remaining goods. However, he adds some elements to the structure of the narrative where, for example, Austerlitz includes some professional categories – art historians, antique dealers and restorers – non-existent in the article- and "Indo-Chinese" guards, who are "Mongolian" in the original.[383] His play with fact and fiction shows itself as a discernible pattern. Sebald indeed virtually invites the reader to investigate the matter, where the reader has always the opportunity to track down the references. As the reader is challenged to look beyond the text with critical eye, the use of place names, dates, and addresses begin to decipher their specific purposes. For example, as Cowan explains in his detailed account, there is no "rue" Emile Zola in Paris, where Austerlitz lived in the late fifties, in a rented room in Haus Nr. 6. Yet Cowan also adds that there is actually an "avenue" Emile Zola, and that Nr.6 on that avenue was the place where Paul Celan lived in the final years of his life. Austerlitz describes the place "not far from the Pont Mirabeau, a shapeless concrete block which I still sometimes see

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[382] *Ibid*., p.203

[383] *Ibid*., p.206

in my nightmares today." Thus, it is a cue inserted into the narrative, since the Pont Mirabeau was the place where Celan ended his life by jumping into the Seine. According to Cowan, Sebald replaces the authentic description of the bridge, which in fact is a light, elegant and low-profile metal construction from the 1890s, with "concrete mass", thus achieving a symbolical meaning while paying tribute to Celan within the text. Another example is the date of Austerlitz's and the narrator's first Paris encounter, which corresponds to the date of the vast fire in Indonesia. Broke out on September 11, 1997, as Cowan notes, it is the fire that they watch on the bistro's television screen.[384]

In this regard, the issue of archive inevitably arouses a question in reader's mind about the authenticity of the work. Moreover, once the tricky details become obvious, the reader is forced to compare them with common experience or the knowledge of "facts on the ground", as Cowan emphasizes, and needs to look for documentary evidence of some kind, usually from other texts.[385] So Sebald's *Austerlitz* becomes an archive of archives which in the end requires a critical eye to decipher historical narratives. This peculiarity strips its sole literary characteristic off and creates a permeable relationship between fact and fiction by leading the reader to be "yanked suddenly out of the text into the world of history or science only to be brought back in again to the ostensibly fictional narrative." Accordingly, facts become fictive not in the sense that they become untrue or distorted, but in the sense that they become newly real, in a way parasitical of, yet rivalrous to, the real world.[386] Therefore, remembering Andreas Huyssen's remark quoted again by Cowan, *Austerlitz* gains a status that prevents itself from being read as a realistic novel. Yet, it

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[384] *Ibid*., pp.56-57

[385] *Ibid*., p.52

[386] *Ibid.*

produces the effect of the real more powerfully than many historical studies. In this respect, it is strictly bounded to the experience and knowledge of the reader, as Sebald writes for relatively sophisticated and literate reader.[387]

Archival material in *Austerlitz* comes up not as a documentary justification of the narrative; but rather, woven into the text, it shows itself as fragments within the storyline. An example is in the very first pages of the book where Austerlitz and the narrator talk about Breendonk. Although architectural critiques and historical descriptions do not appear in the form of verified accounts, the narrator mentions a newspaper article, published in *Gazet van Antwerpen* or *La libre Belgique*, which he notices right after his extensive discussion with Austerlitz. It is presented as a coincidence because the article is about the fortress of Breendonk, which had to surrender in 1940 to the Germans. Summarizing the article, he says "it was made into a reception and penal camp which remained in existence until August 1944, and … since 1947, preserved unchanged as far as possible, it had been a national memorial and a museum of the Belgian Resistance."[388] Revealing an understanding of history within the framework of "afterlife", this statement also functions in the text as an implication of the narrator's being informed by secondary sources before his own experience in the site. In other words, he becomes educated. Spending hours in Breendonk which makes him feel very nauseated, the narrator again refers to an archival material, this time to Jean Amery, who suffered in Breendonk, too. While describing the dreadful physical closeness between torturers and their victims, Sebald feels the necessity to switch to French, where he uses a quotation from Claude Simon's *Le Jardin des Plantes*. Linking different tortures together, he creates a family resemblance between two

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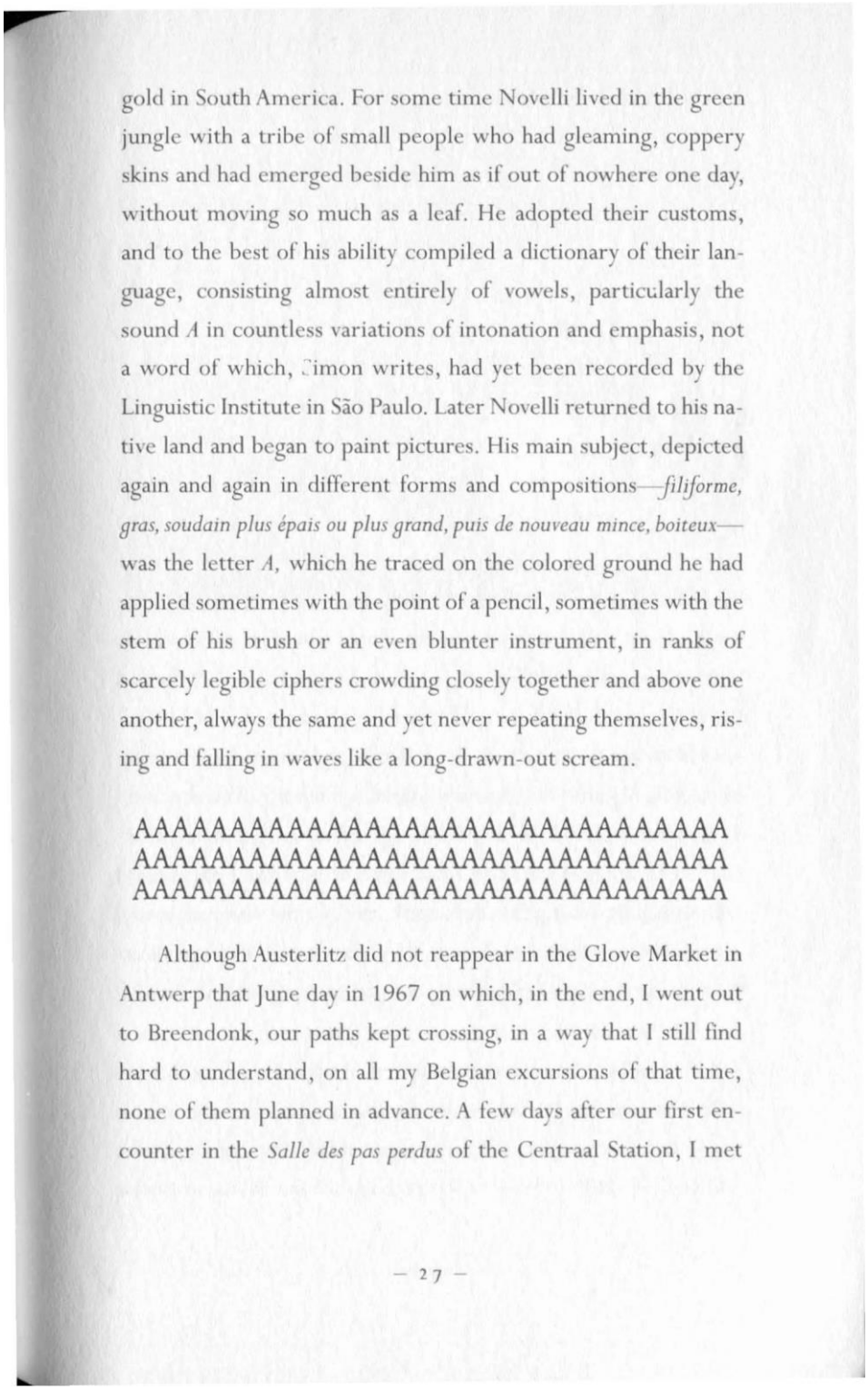
[387] *Ibid*., p.55

[388] Sebald, 2001, p.19

separate accounts. Noting the tale of Gastone Novelli, who was subjected to torture just like Amery, the narrator gives a brief summary of a passage in that book. Ending it without a comment, what he does is to give a vision of a painful history that the victims had been through by quoting only the capital letter A in three full lines that sound like a silent scream.[389] **(fig.3.3.5)**

[389] *Ibid*., pp.26-27



gold in South America. For some time Novelli lived in the green jungle with a tribe of small people who had gleaming, coppery skins and had emerged beside him as if out of nowhere one day, without moving so much as a leaf. He adopted their customs, and to the best of his ability compiled a dictionary of their language, consisting almost entirely of vowels, particularly the sound *A* in countless variations of intonation and emphasis, not a word of which, Simon writes, had yet been recorded by the Linguistic Institute in São Paulo. Later Novelli returned to his native land and began to paint pictures. His main subject, depicted again and again in different forms and compositions—*filiforme, gras, soudain plus épais ou plus grand, puis de nouveau mince, boiteux*—was the letter *A*, which he traced on the colored ground he had applied sometimes with the point of a pencil, sometimes with the stem of his brush or an even blunter instrument, in ranks of scarcely legible ciphers crowding closely together and above one another, always the same and yet never repeating themselves, rising and falling in waves like a long-drawn-out scream.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Although Austerlitz did not reappear in the Glove Market in Antwerp that June day in 1967 on which, in the end, I went out to Breendonk, our paths kept crossing, in a way that I still find hard to understand, on all my Belgian excursions of that time, none of them planned in advance. A few days after our first encounter in the *Salle des pas perdus* of the Centraal Station, I met

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Figure 3.3.5: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. Anthea Bell. (New York: Penguin, 2001), p.27

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Against Conventional Historiography

As discussed in the previous chapters of this study, W. G. Sebald's reliance on photography, architecture, travel, and archive within his fictional construction reveals, in a larger sense, the modernist vision of salvation through art, thus creating a literature of restitution. His use of photographs expects from the reader to reconstruct and interpret their meaning to access "the fleeting underside of European history that was forgotten when one looks only on the surface of history" in James P. Martin's words"[390] On the other hand, the non-linear and anti-teleological structure of the archive provides the reader the chance for creating new associations. Yet, neither photographs nor archival materials by themselves are sufficient in this process, so it can be seen that Sebald's figures find themselves responding to their surroundings, experiencing and studying them. These occur even at the times of mental paralysis and a failure of language. In the end, all of them are transferred to the reader by means of retelling. This retelling of an event is typical when discourse changes are considered. They are manipulated in the transfer process and placed within a specific narrative context, which can be regarded as history, in general. James Chandler remarks that Sebald's *Austerlitz* is a book in which

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[390] Martin, 2007, p.55

a vast array of historical forms are used: "the most prominently the panorama and the immersive dialogue, along with the collection, the historical painting, the photographic essay, the archaeologists' strata, the messianic epiphany, and the document."[391]

So unlike many conventional literary works, apparent projections towards history turn Sebald's projects – especially *Austerlitz* – into an important case study for historiographical research. Firstly, it is the definition of a historical event that Sebald reworks, and secondly, it is the context that how a historical event is grasped. Kimberly Mair illuminates this point by saying that Sebald disregards the history's tendency toward solidification by adopting an approach in which individuals experience events sensually. In this process, she continues, Sebald methodologically benefits from the limits of language and the forms of the utilitarian speech acts that artificially solidify things and their relations.[392] Thus it can be said that what Sebald accomplishes in a broader context is to redefine the relationship between history and language – where language simply designates a specific and singular object or situation; comprehensible only within the given discourse. So by emphasizing the sensual and descriptive elements of any past event, Sebald reworks the transformation process. As Michel Beaujour argues, "When it is described in some detail, an everyday object becomes de-familiarized, and as it ceases to be taken for granted, it assumes the enigmatic aura of things in dreams and fantasy."[393] In this paradoxical relationship between the past and historical documents, the more it is revealed through analysis, the more it gets difficult to make generalizations and the more its truth recedes in a series of hermeneutic shocks that lead away

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[391] Chandler, 2003, p.258

[392] Mair, 2007, pp.242-243

[393] Kouvaros, 2009, pp.401-402

from the normal to the absurd.[394] Yet, while detaching history from a literal – realistic reproduction of the past – Sebald never gives up the concrete, documentary quality of the reality effect because, as he notices, it is always about the millions that were sent to the gas chambers – not an anonymous mass, but single individual human beings.[395] On the other hand, as Samuel Todd Presner emphasizes, Sebald's writings are important not because they are purely historical but because they present the possibility of creating a new narrative form.[396] According to him, Sebald uses literature to create an "artificial" or perhaps even "artful" view where he favors the genuineness of "authentic documents", which are constructed as intertextual references that provide him a different form of documentary fiction. By means of them, he tries to understand and represent the aftermath of 1943 – how they gain knowledge of the catastrophe, what sorts of memories they create about it, and what kind of relationships they have to it – rather than attempting to recreate the past of 1943 as it really was or might have been. This sensibility proves his concern of the present, of what people who were born after the catastrophe know about what happened. In this way, employing a variety of historiographical methods and following Adler's footprints, Sebald aims to elude the risks in so-called scientific or historic facts that cover up or level out actual individual experience. Thus, in his practice, literature becomes the privileged source for such engagement with the past, where he uses creative possibilities of the junction between document and fiction.

Yet bringing together different forms of writing is not always adequate because the relationship between what is called history and its representation is not

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[394] Lindgren, 2002, p.377

[395] Wolff, 2009, p.320

[396] Presner, 2004, p.357

static; some more parameters always supervene. Due to this situation, especially modern times require further treatment. Referring to Benjamin, Presner continues to explain that "the ability to exchange experiences" has been lost in modern times, because the nature of the war event – World War I – has changed. "As the battles were no longer conducted according to the cyclical rhythms of the day" Presner says, "they were not confined to a single theater, and the action tore apart the traditional relationship between experience and expectation." Therefore, the massive scale of the deaths and technological annihilation have changed the relationship between time and space. Since stable unities of time, place and action are lost, they cannot be captured, communicated or employed by traditional structures. Moreover, coherences of realistic narration, photography and historicism are betrayed, so new techniques are needed, which is the case in *Austerlitz*. These include the use of intransitive writing, the dissolution of objective narration, the multiplication of perspectives, the embrace of contingency, the blurring of fact and fiction through narrative ruptures, levellings and blockages, and the creation of what Sebald calls "a synoptic and artificial view."[397] Though Sebald manages to create a modernist reality effect by using modernist techniques, it is a different form of realism that detaches history from the literal reproduction of the past. The aim is to use representation to approximate, as closely as possible, the original event.

At this point, it is important to note that in his approach towards spatial and cultural histories, Sebald does not completely reject nineteenth and twentieth century frameworks but rather reworks them through specific ambivalences inherent to these centuries. For example, in his criticism of the German-Jewish ghetto story of the nineteenth century, Sebald exposes the Eurocentricity of

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[397] *Ibid*., p.345

ethnography. Yet, here, Anne Fuchs points out his failure to see the complementary characteristics of ethnography and pathography, which are originated in the imperial century, so his construction of an opposition between these two disciplines results in ambiguity of the shared ideological horizon. Because, as Fuchs emphasizes, "ethnography seeks to catalogue and arguably control inter-ethnic and intercultural differences from the point of view of the Western center and pathography as a sub-discipline of psychiatry analyses, catalogues and controls deviant behaviour in the individual."[398] Regardless of the gaps in his understanding, what Sebald aims to reveal is a kind of vision unified around some parameters such as "destruction" – a constant – and "time" – non-linear. Therefore, as Presner underlines, he offers a "synoptic view" of the totality of the destruction through the multiplicity and simultaneity of its many contingent perspectives.[399] Following Mark McCulloh, Paul Sheehan suggests that in order to create "historical metaphysics," Sebald does not refrain from transforming the material traces to reveal patterns of entropy, where "history is a continual depletion that stands for absolute loss, for people, events and stories as permanently irrecoverable."[400] The best example of this approach perhaps is the reworking of the context of Jean Amery's memoirs. Presner explains it as a layering of memories in a Freudian sense. Sebald collects the narrator's memories from a later period which in turn are mixed with Austerlitz's childhood memories that date back to 1943, when Amery was tortured. Intriguingly, these are all narrated together from the perspective of the

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[398] Fuchs, 2007, p.119

[399] Presner, 2004, p.356

[400] Paul Sheehan, "A History of Smoke: W.G. Sebald and the Memory of Fire", *Textual Practice*, 26.4 (2012), p.736

late 1990s.[401] By means of a similar staging or framing, Sebald narrates Nazi concentration camp which can turn, as if by alchemy, into a model plush town. So, Jacques Austerlitz and the narrator's conversation on the 19th century model camps which covers tens of pages before and seems very meaningless at the beginning, becomes pertinent in a historical context by means of family resemblances. Besides, as Alexender Verdolini notes, Austerlitz describes in detail the so-called Verschönerungsaktion:

> by which the Nazis clean up Theresienstadt in preparation for a visit from a Red Cross delegation. Thousands of the "weniger ansehnlichen Personen" are shipped off east to their deaths; the rest are put to the task of beautifying the ghetto – planting rosebushes, setting up a concert hall and coffeehouse – and then to the second sickening task of appearing to enjoy them.[402]

Just like Patricia Morton's reconceptualization of Walter Benjamin's theory of history, as discussed previously in this study, this periscopic narration composes and reveals the coexistence of the social, economical, and architectural lives/afterlives of these buildings. In this sense, architectural history takes place right in this thick discourse where it acts both as a primary and auxiliary concern in representing multi-layered histories. In this way, the realism of Sebald's modernism interrogates conventional strategies of the historical novel.

Furthermore, Sebald's sense of historiography also challenges post-modern culture, and specifically, post-war literature. This time it is the critique of aesthetics and ethics with which Sebald is concerned. As Manfred Jugensen points out, Sebald deplores many authors dealing with Germany's Nazi past who have fallen into artistic, personal and moral bankruptcy because,

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[401] Presner, 2004, p.349

[402] Verdolini, 2013, p.624

according to him, much of post-war German literature bears witness only to the pathological loss of its own collective, historical, imaginative and moral truthfulness.[403]

This also explains considerably his engagement with fictional writing, since fiction can provide him with a sense of coinciding aesthetics – a kind of correlation of literary expression and individual integrity of documentation. As Sebald considers the act of reading as a way of travelling and writing, and accordingly, as a tool for transforming the past into a shared present, in his practice, the critic as a historian of literature must personally identify herself/himself with the author to be able to recapture the author's individual knowledge and truth regarding the ethical responsibilities and aesthetical possibilities. Methodologically, the critic turns herself/himself into a fictional character of a correlative narrative while invoking the ghostly presence of words in a narrative.[404] Thus, this approach breaks the authorial characteristic of being "the" historian. Here, just like blurring the border between fact and fiction, Sebald also obscures the line between the author and the narrator, and the historian and the poet, because he finds any form of authorial writing – "where the narrator sets himself up as stagehand and director and judge and executor" – unacceptable.[405] However, it does not mean to eliminate critical approach in a literary context. As Samuel Todd Presner explains by referring to R.G. Collingwood's argument, an author of a historical novel and a historian do not differ in terms of imagination, because both of them construct a coherent picture that makes sense. But the historian has another task which is to construct a picture of things as they really were and of events as they really

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[403] Jugensen, 2009, p.429

[404] *Ibid*., p.430

[405] De la Durantaye, 2008, p.436

happened. To do so, Presner continues, "historian must consult documents and use his/her imagination to re-enact the past in his own mind." Using the metaphor of bringing the dead back to life, he also points out that the historian creates a space for the revival of the object of historical knowledge. According to him, the historian's fantasy is really to live among, talk to, and ultimately, harbour the dead, which, as a historical practice, approaches a discourse of necrophilic realism that differs both from historical realism and from literary realism by means of solidifying reality effect.[406]

Within the boundaries of this understanding, Sebald uses different voices such as those of Jacques Austerlitz, the narrator, Andre Hillary etc. to empower the feature of collective voices. Regarding even the indirect speech, Sebald further distorts the authorial matrix. For example, nearly two pages are reserved for Austerlitz's recollection of Hillary's historiographical operations. James Chandler explains Hillary's practice as a combination of two forms: one is the form of dramatic immersion in which the historian assumes the point of view of various agents by turn; and the other is the panaromic form in which the historian presumes to hover above the event assuming "the view from nowhere."[407] So the plurality of the voices that Sebald creates within his narratives associates with Roland Barthes's famous "death of the author." However, the case of *Austerlitz* is more complicated because there is also a great sense of autobiographical reflections. For example, the narrator in the book was born in Germany around 1944 and grew up in the provincial town of "W" – Sebald's birthplace is Wertach – where the narrator stayed until the age of twenty and then he left Germany to study in England. The fictional narrator figure creates a mirror image of Sebald, while leading to the loss of the sight of

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[406] Presner, 2004, p.346

[407] Chandler, 2003, p.258

ultimate periscopic shift. As Presner notes, Sebald's memories of World War II are not based upon direct and personal experiences but upon shadows cast by retrospectively encountered images that are contemporaneous with the beginnings of his own life.[408] On the other hand, Jugensen interprets this presence of Sebald's individual voice in *Austerlitz* as a contribution to historical witnessing is a part of collective voice articulating human experience. This is an approach which can be called "coincidental" and "over-the-shoulder" witnessing of historical fiction and which can de related to Barthes's view of authorial and critical "I" presenting "a plurality of other texts."[409] In this respect, Deane Blackler adds that as the author's voice is archived, the living voice it expresses becomes musealised in the text, where Sebald creates a co-authorial and co-sensual continuation of cultural narratives.[410]

Concerned with the historical and ethical resonances of abandoned things within the cultural logics of commodity production, Sebald criticizes the remains of Enlightenment project in post-war Germany and contemporary German literature due to its lack of resistance against official histories of the Holocaust. This sensibility can be seen in every case and in every scale in *Austerlitz*. It embraces not only people as representatives of families and societies but also spaces as representatives of their lives, all destroyed and broken apart due to the Holocaust.[411] Even the animals are the witnesses of

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[408] Presner, 2004, p.352

[409] Jugensen, 2009, p.434

[410] Blackler, 2009, p.380

[411] Hennlich, 2007, p.11

these sufferings.[412] In this regard, Bianca Theisen shows the relation of Sebald's position to Postmodern criticism, but also adds:

> he tries out new tracks and does some skilful dodging within this territory mapped out by postmodernism. Because his is not a postmodernism that dissolves the particular into an indistinct or a historical heterogeneity, espouses blithe proliferation of simulacra or limits itself to a disengaged play of textual self-reference.[413]

So by distancing himself from a brand of postmodernism, Sebald also distances himself from any strict literary definition of style or period to find a standpoint to represent the excluded in history.

4.2 Historiography of the Spectral

Against the aesthetic problem of postmodernism as the articulation of a new conception of space – suggested by number of critics including Daniel Bell, Fredric Jameson and David Harvey – Michel Foucault, as Mary Griffin Wilson points out, argues that throughout the history of Western philosophy, "space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic."[414] In *Austerlitz*, this Foucauldian point is combined with Walter Benjamin's conception of time.

As Noam M. Elcott explains, for Benjamin, history is not located in empty time but rather is constituted in a specific epoch, in a specific life, in a specific

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[412] Kouvaros, 2009, p.399

[413] Theisen, 2004, p.175

[414] Cited in Wilson, 2013, p.65

work.[415] As it needs to be exploded out of its reified "historical continuity," the researcher becomes conscious of the critical constellation in which the fragment of the past finds itself precisely in this present. While it contains each passing present within itself (not the particular elements of the past but always the totality of the past in Deleuzian sense),[416] ghosts of the past haunt the present by blurring the line between "now" and "then" which highlights the lines of continuity – yet non-progressive and non-linear – especially in spaces in relation to a spatio-temporal framework.

In this respect, fractures within historical time which create isolated moments of time are found in Sebald's writing practice as sequenced montages of the past's frozen moments. Here, it should be noted that montage is not only a literary issue. The themes of travel and archive are also manifestations of montage. In a multi-layered context, it can also be said that this particular presence of time, which is suggested by the language-uttered spaces such as *Salle des pas Perdus*, becomes employed by the medium of the text. Griffin Wilson indicates that such spatial conflations of past and present occur throughout the book, where Sebald – thereby the protagonist, Jacques Austerlitz – in his meditation on the measurement of time, reverts himself to a spatial understanding of it. So in the spatially configured narrative, time is not detached from materiality, just on the contrary, it plays a leading role in its formation.[417] As cited in George Kauvaros' article, Eric Sartner describes these connections as a "spectral materialism," which has "a capacity to register the persistence of past suffering that has in some sense been absorbed into the

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[415] Elcott, 2004, p.203

[416] Wilson, 2013, p.68

[417] *Ibid*., p.66

substance of lived space, into the setting of human history."[418] Mark M. Anderson's review of Austerlitz sets the most concrete example to this view:

> When Jacques Austerlitz arrives in Paris in the 1980s he is seeking about his Jewish father's passage there forty years earlier. He walks the streets, plunges into his family's past, relives the traumatic events of the 1930s and 1940s. But in his wanderings, he notices the Parisian subway stations recalling famous Napoleonic battles: Iena, Solferino, and of course 'his' Austerlitz, the train station where, perhaps, his father boarded a train to the south to escape the German army, but also the site of the French army's victory more than a hundred years earlier. After suffering a nervous breakdown, he hallucinates that he is wandering through a maze of Metro passageways filled with fallen soldiers, exiles, and the persecuted: "I saw armies of these unredeemed souls thronging over bridges to the opposite bank, or coming towards me down the tunnels, their eyes fixed, cold, and dead."[419]

Jacques Derrida's understanding of the spectral, as discussed by John Wylie in relation to Sebald's work, broadens the scope further. According to Derrida, spectrality is the condition of the constitution of space and time, presence and absence. This unsettling process begins by coming back; it continues endlessly, and therefore, never arrives anywhere.[420]

Then, regarding spatial and architectural historiography, the very basic question is how we may learn to see these ghostly places. The answer lies in the paradoxical phenomenality; in between visibility and invisibility; and between the observer and the observed. As John Wylie explains:

> The spectre is visible but there is something disappeared, departed in the apparition itself as reapparition of the departed. Equally the

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[418] Kouvaros, 2009, p.396

[419] Anderson, 2003, pp.120-121

[420] Wylie, 2007, p.171

> spectre is invisible, but it watches, it is the unseen seeing and we feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before any apparition.[421]

Overlapping with Patricia Morton's conception of afterlives of buildings, as discussed previously in this study, these viewpoints provide a consciousness towards history whether it is general or specific, namely architectural. So it can be suggested that in its sustained meditations upon the relationships among place, memory and subjectivity, Sebald's writing is directed towards a metaphysics of place which has already been described as a new historiography, as John Wylie remarks.[422] Therefore, it can be argued that *Austerlitz* presents an alternative way of writing history interwoven through the self, space/place, act of moving and remembrance. Yet, this is a writing of the spectral, considering that the spectral, in Wylie's words, "not only displaces place and self through the freight of ghostly memories; it works to displace the present from itself."[423]

To conclude, it can be suggested that W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* is the manifestation of a practice and theory of writing history as literature, which "opens up a rich field for understanding how we live with, and reject things, and how the life of things, after we are done with them, persists and resists."[424]

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[421] *Ibid*., p.172

[422] *Ibid*., p.173

[423] *Ibid*., p.181

[424] Hawkins, 2009, p.161

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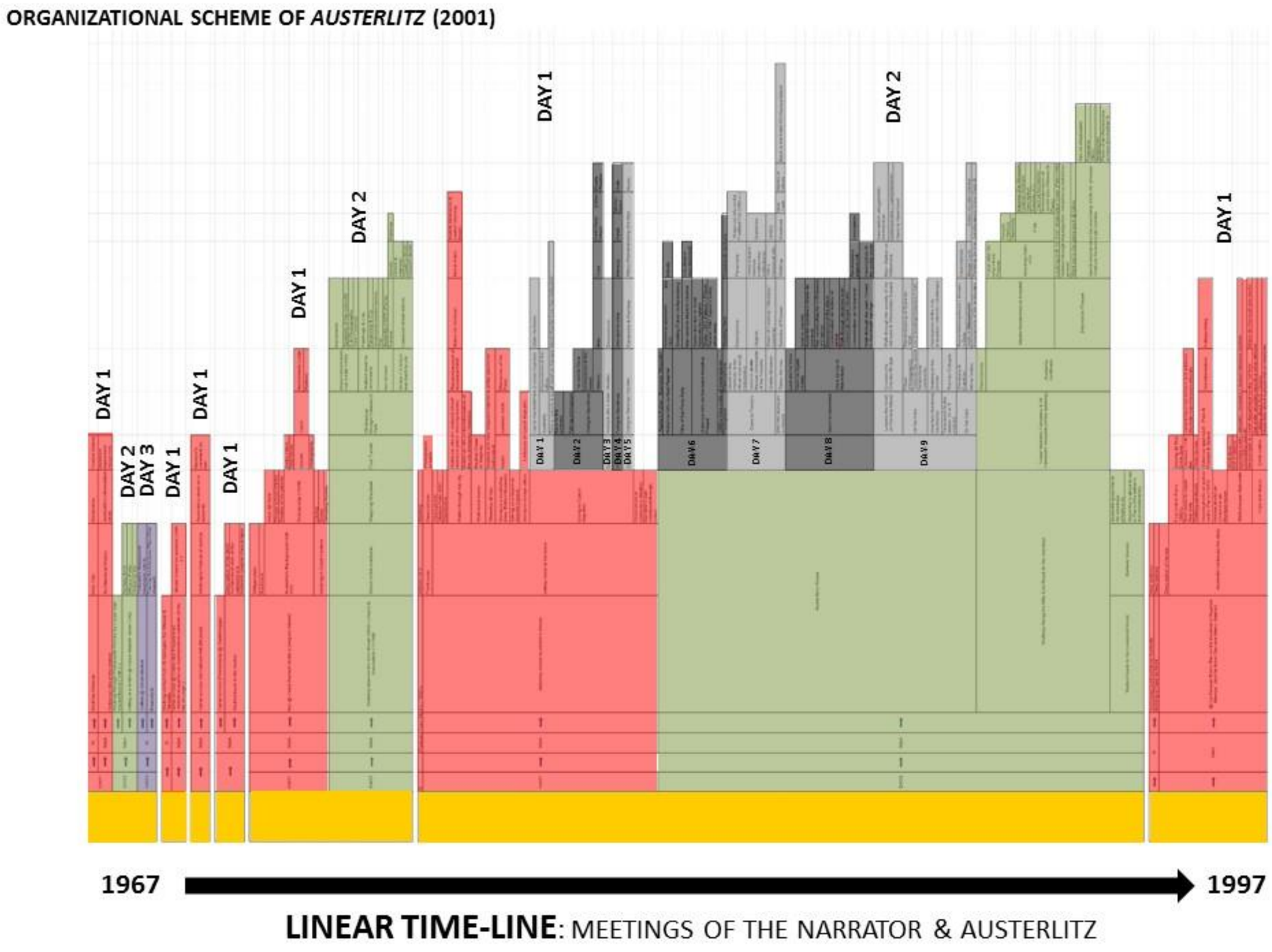
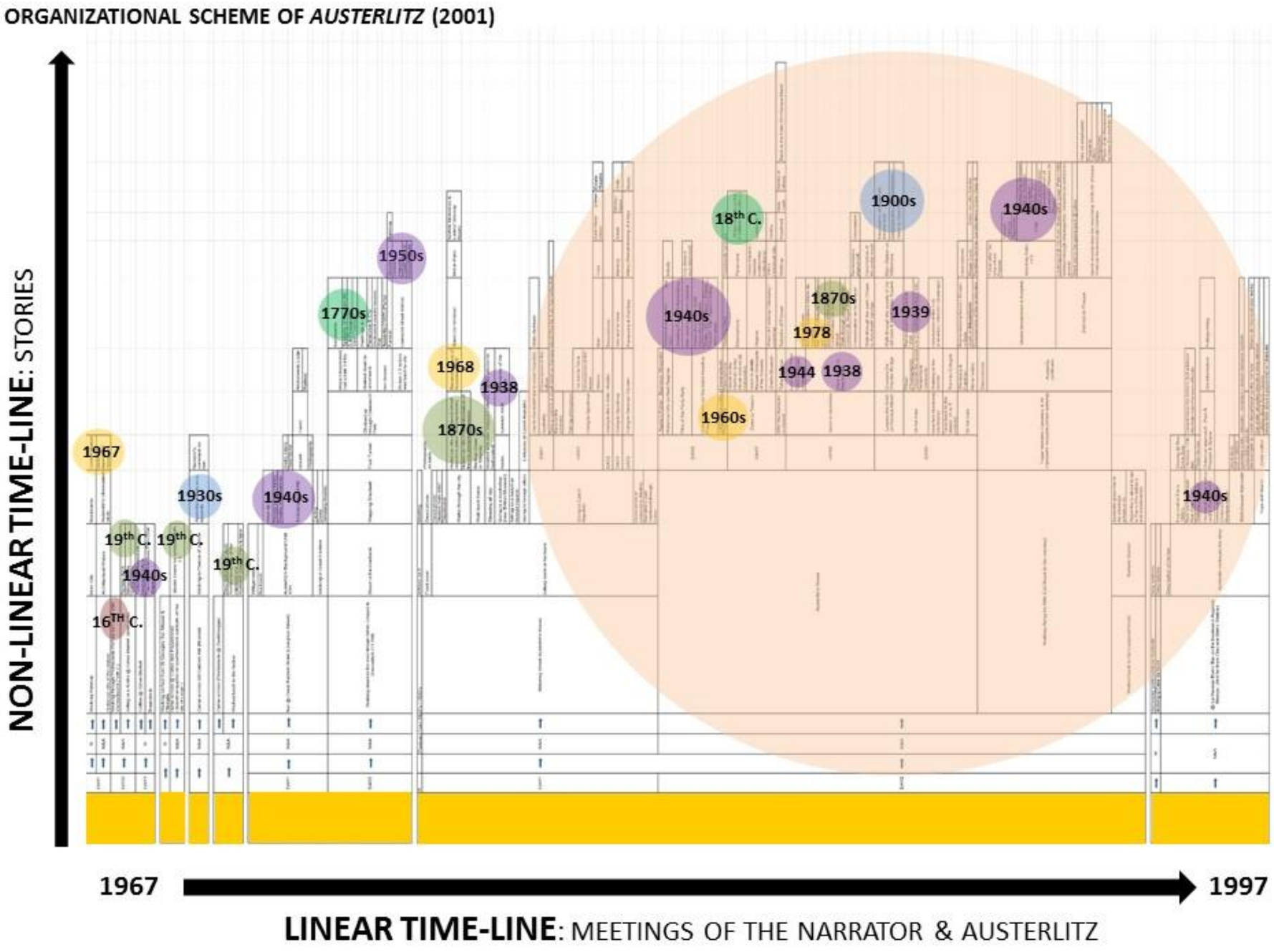
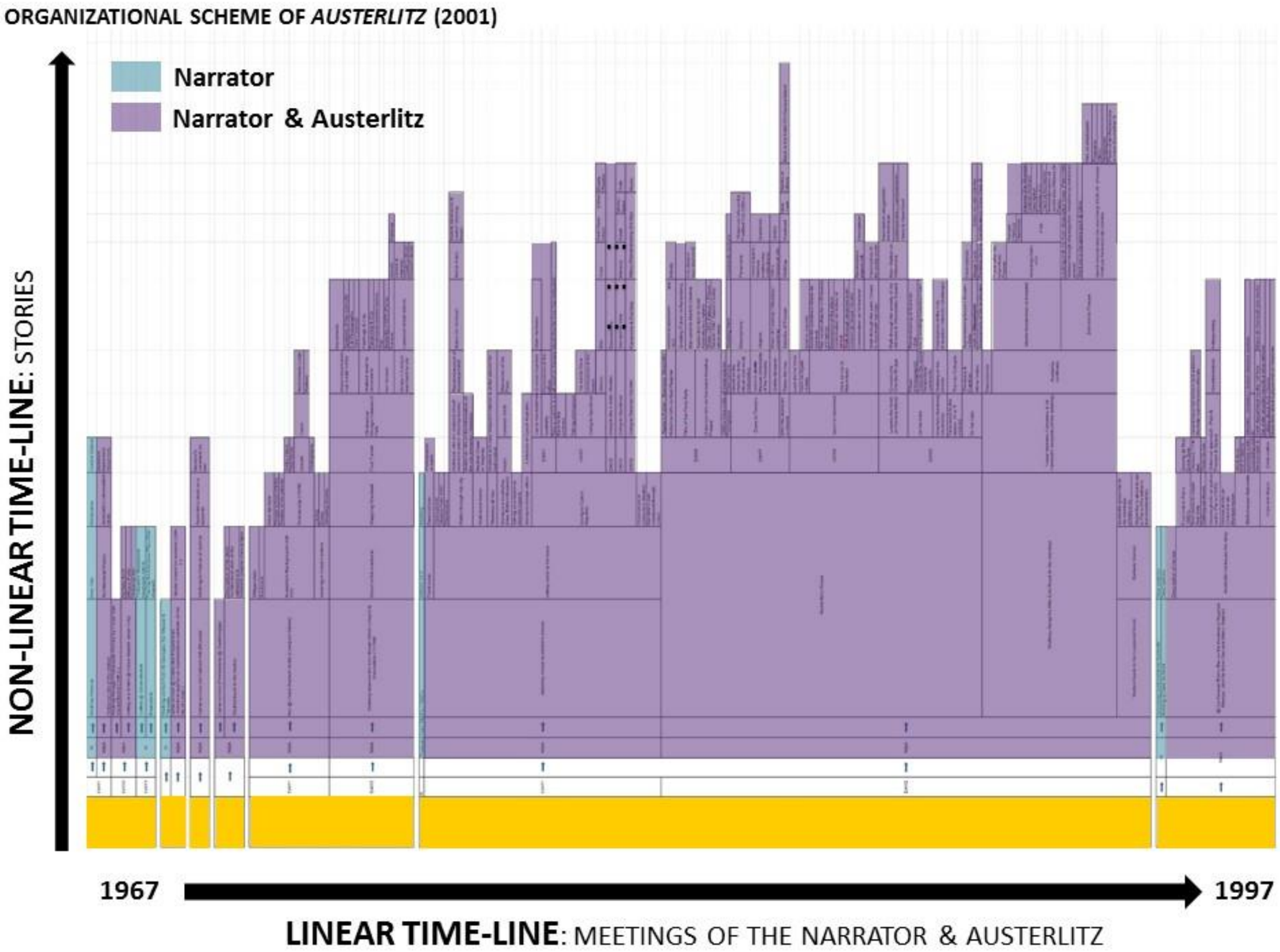
APPENDIX A: LINEAR ORGANIZATION OF THE STORY (produced by the author)



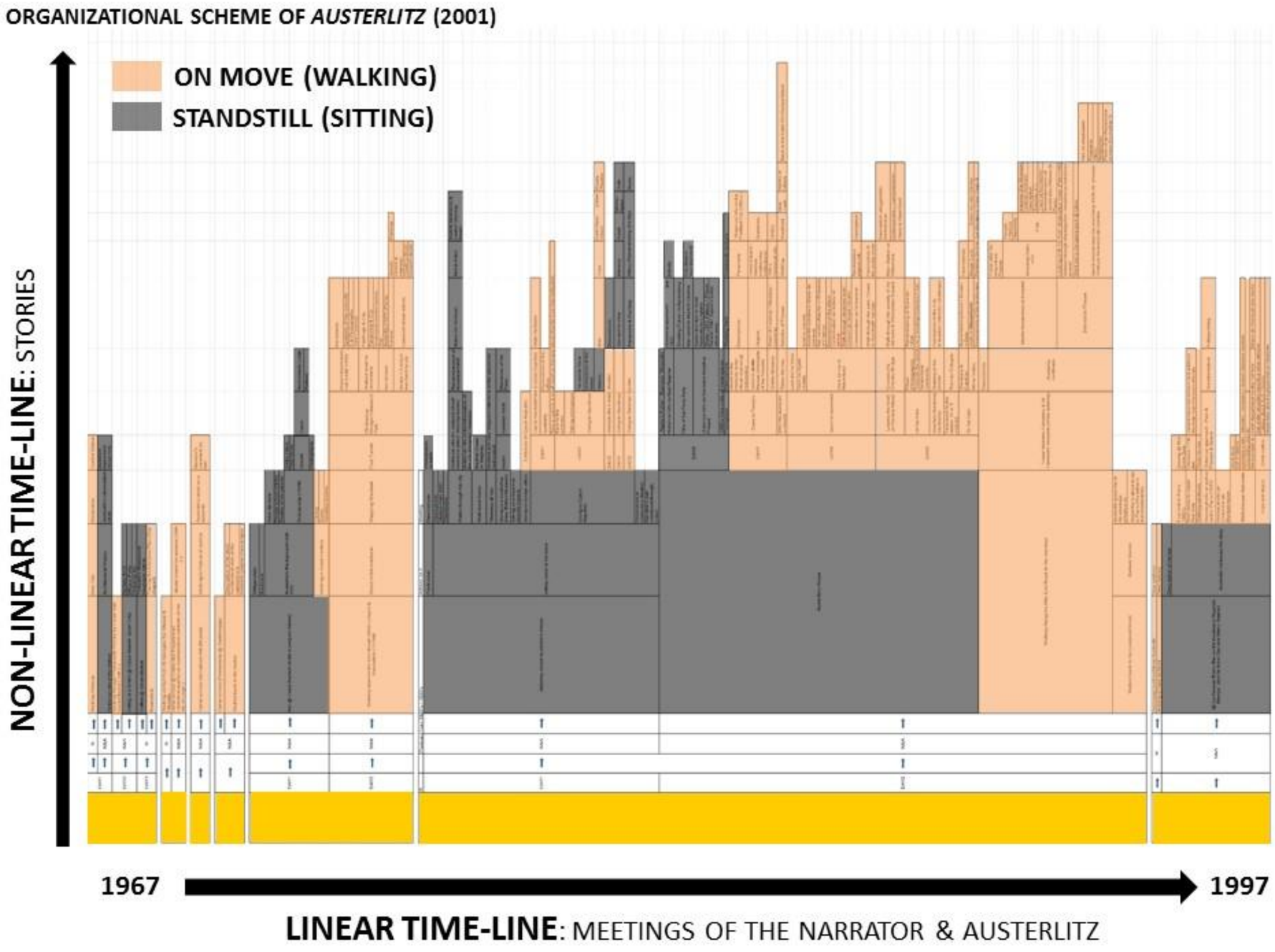
APPENDIX B: NON-LINEAR ORGANIZATION OF THE STORY (produced by the author)



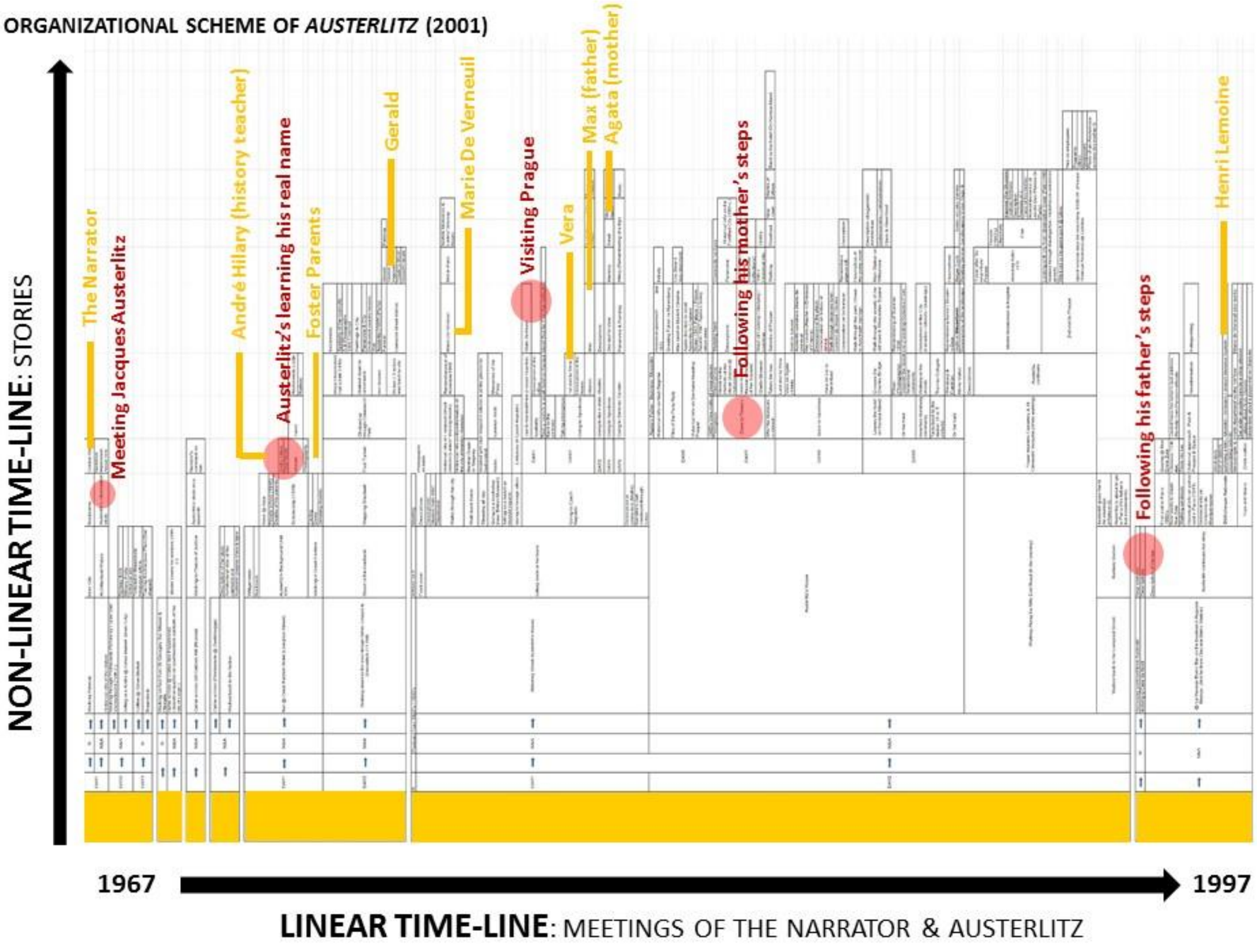
APPENDIX C: THE NARRATOR & AUSTERLITZ (produced by the author)



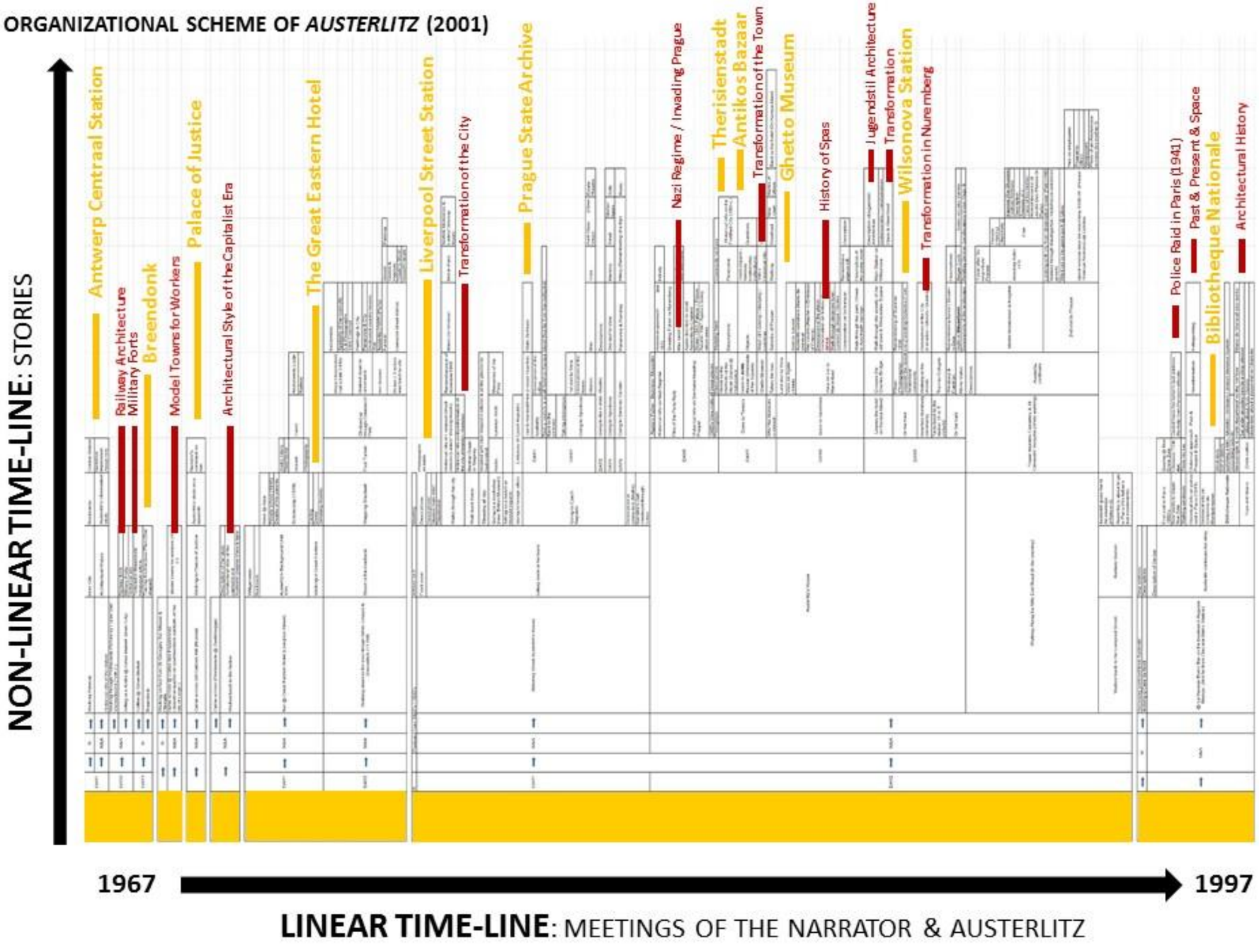
APPENDIX D: MOBILITY & IMMOBILITY (produced by the author)



APPENDIX E: CHARACTERS (produced by the author)



APPENDIX F: INTEGRATION OF SPACES – ARCHITECTURE (produced by the author)



APPENDIX G: TURKISH SUMMARY

Sebald'ın kurmaca yazınında, fotoğraf, mimarlık, yolculuk ve her türlü arşiv malzemesine yer vermesi, daha büyük ölçekte, yenilikçi bakışın bir getirisi olan "sanat yoluyla kurtuluş" u ortaya koymakta ve böylelikle bir restitüsyon edebiyatı yaratmaktadır. Bir daha hatırlatmak gerekirse, Sebald fotoğraf kullanımı, gözlemcinin anlamın yeniden kurgulanması ve yorumlamasına dayanmaktadır. Bu gereklilik, James P. Martin'in "Tarihe yüzeysel bakıldığında yitip giden, Avrupa tarihinin unutulmuş kısımları" bağlamına erişebilmek içindir ve bu süreçte, arşivin lineer olmayan ve teleolojik olmayan yapısı gözlemciye yeni ilişkiler kurmada imkan sunmaktadır.[425] Dahası Sebald'ın kurmaca figürleri – ruhsal paraliz ve iletişim dilini kaybetme durumunda bile – deneyimleme ve irdeleme yöntemiyle, çevreleri ile ilişki kurmaktan geri kalmazlar ve bu deneyimler okuyucuya yeniden anlatma/tekrarlama tekniği ile yansıtılır. Aslında bu anlatım, tarih olarak adlandırılan pratikte, diskur değişimleri ve bir olayı aktarırken yaşanan manüplasyonlara karşı belirli bir anlatı bağlamına oturtulması açısından tipiktir. James Chandler'in bildirdiği üzere, aslında Sebald'ın *Austerlitz*'i başlı başına, "koleksiyon, tarihsel resim, fotoğrafik deneme yazısı, arkeolojik katman, mesihi tezahür ve belgenin yanında en belirgin olan panorama ve sürükleyici diyalog" gibi çeşitli tarihsel formların sıraya konduğu bir kitaptır.[426]

Bu sebeple, konvansiyonel anlayışın dışına çıkan belirgin tarihsel yansıtımlar, Sebald'ın projelerini, özellikle de Austerlitz'i, tarih yazımını inceleyebilmek adına, bir çok alışılagelmiş edebi ürünün aksine, önemli örnek çalışmalara

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[425] Martin, 2007, p.55

[426] Chandler, 2003, p.258

döndürmektedir. Bunlar, ilk olarak, Sebald'ın tarihsel olay tanımını ve ikinci olarak da tarihsel olayların nasıl algılandığını belirleyen bağlamı yeniden çalışmasıdır. Bu noktada, Kimberly Mair, Sebald'ın bireylerin ve öznelerin toplu ve duyumsal olarak olaylarını deneyimleme biçimlerine dikkat çekmek suretiyle tarihin sabitleşmeye olan eğilimini gözardı ettiğinden bahsederek konuya açıklık getirir. Ve dahası, bu süreçte Sebald, metodolojik olarak dilin sınırlarından yararlanır. Dilin sınırları, Artaud'un kuramında, şeyleri ve şeylerin birbirleriyle ilişkilerini sabitleyen pratik sözeylem biçimlerine referans verir.[427] Söylenebilir ki, Sebald, daha geniş bir bağlamda, tarih ve dil arasındaki ilişkinin – burada dil, sadece belirtilen diskurda algılanabilen belirli ve tekil bir obje ya da durumu tanımlar – yeniden tanımlanmasını başarıyla sağlamaktadır. Böylelikle, Sebald, herhangi bir geçmiş olayın duyumsal ve betimsel elemanlarına vurgu yaparak, dönüşüm sürecini yeniden çalışmaktadır. Michel Beaujour'un tartıştığı üzere, "Belli bir detay seviyesinde tanımlandığında, sıradan bir obje yabancılaşır ve öylesine kabul edilen bir durumdan çıktığı için de şeylerin rüya ve fantezi halinde ortaya çıkan esrarengiz atmosferini üstlenir.[428] Geçmiş ve tarihsel döküman arasındaki bu paradoksal ilişkide, analiz yoluyla daha çok bilgi açığa çıkarıldıkça, genellemelerde bulunmak bir o kadar zorlaşır ve gerçek, yorumbilimsel dalgalar halinde, normalden absürde doğru daha da geri çekilir.[429] Fakat, tarihi gerçeğinden, geçmişin gerçekçi bir şekilde yeniden üretilmesinden, koparırken, Sebald hiçbir zaman gerçek etkisinin somut, belgesel niteliğinden vazgeçmez; çünkü Sebald'ın da dikkat çektiği üzere, konu her zaman gaz odalarına gönderilen milyonlar hakkında olmuştur, halbuki onlar isimsiz kitleler değil, bu

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[427] Mair, 2007, pp.242-243

[428] Kouvaros, 2009, pp.401-402

[429] Lindgren, 2002, p.377

gerçekleri yaşamış tek ve ayrı ayrı bireylerdir.[430] Bu süreçte, Sebald'ın yazınını dikkate değer kılan şey ise Samuel Todd Presner'ın vurguladığı gibi, ürünlerinin tamamen tarihsel olması değil, aslında yeni anlatı biçimleri yaratabilme olasılığıdır. [431] Sebald'ın, edebiyat ve "hakiki belgeler" in özgünlüğünü metinlerarası referanslar şekilde kurgulayarak yarattığı bu "yapay" ve hatta "sanatsal" görüş, onun yazınını belgesel kurmaca yazının başka bir formu haline getirir. Bu sayede de 1943'ü olduğu gibi ya da olabileceklerin ihtimallerini yeniden yaratmak yerine bu durumun akıbetini – bu süreçte nasıl hatıraların yaratıldığını ve ne tür ilişkiler kurulduğunu – anlamaya ve tasvir etmeye çalışır, ki bu da Sebald'ın esas ilgisinin aslında şimdiki zamanla ve facidan sonra doğmuş olan insanların ne bildikleri ile ilgili olduğunu bir kez daha kanıtlar. Kurmaca yazın ve belgelerin kesişiminde yarattığı bu yazın stili ile de bilimsel ya da tarihsel kabul edilen gerçeklerin bireysel deneyimlerin önüne geçmesi risklerini de en aza indirgemeye çalışır.

Fakat farklı yazın formlarını bir araya getirmek her zaman yeterli olmaz; çünkü tarih ve tarihin tasviri arasındaki ilişki durağan değildir, her zaman daha fazla girdi eklenmektedir. Bu sebepten modern zamanlar daha ileri bir yaklaşıma gereksinimi doğurur. Samuel Todd Presner'in söylediği üzere, Benjamin'in diskurunda deneyimleri takas etme becerisi modern zamanlarda kaybolmuştur, bu da savaşın doğasının, 1. Dünya Savaşı özelinde, değişmesinden kaynaklanır. "Savaşlar artık gün döngüsüne göre yönetilmediğinden" der Benjamin, "tek bir sahneye sıkışmamaktadırlar ve bu yüzden eylem, deneyim ve beklenti arasındaki geleneksel ilişkiyi bozmuştur." Kitlesel ölçekteki ölümler ve durumun deneyimlenmesini etkileyen teknolojik imha kapsamında, yeni yüzyılın başında ayrıca zaman ve mekan arasındaki ilişki de değişmiştir.

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[430] Wolff, 2009, p.320

[431] Presner, 2004, p.357

Zamanın, mekanın ve eylemin durağan bütünlüğü, geleneksel yapı ve gerçekçi anlatımla yakalanamaz, iletişim kurulamaz ve öykülendirilemez hale gelmiş; fotoğraf ve tarihselcilik ihanete uğramıştır. Bu sebepten de *Austerlitz*'teki gibi yeni tekniklere gereksinim ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu yeni teknikler, geçişsiz yazımı, tarafsız anlatımın çözülmesini, bakış açılarının çoğalmasını, beklenmedik durumların ve olasılıkların kabul edilmesini, gerçek ve kurmaca arasındaki çizginin anlatımdaki kırılmalardan dolayı belirsizleşmesini, düzleştirme ve ablukaları ve tabiki Sebald'ın "sinoptik ve yapay bakış" ının yaratılmasını kapsar.[432] Modern tekniklerle farklı bir gerçekçilik – realism – yaratırken, Sebald'ın buradaki amac tasvir yoluyla esas olaya olabildiğince yakınsamaktır.

Bu noktada, Sebald'ın mekansal ve kültürel tarihleri ele alırken ondokuzuncu ve yirminci yüzyıl çerçevelerini tamamen reddetmediğini not etmek gerekir. Aksine Sebald bu çerçeveleri, bu dönemlerin belirli ikirciklikleri kapsamında çalışarak yeniden yorumlar. Mesela, ondokuzuncu yüzyıl Alman-Yahudi getto hikayesini kritik ederken etnografinin avrupa merkezciliğini (Eurocentricity) ortaya koyar. Fakat bu noktada, Anne Fuchs, Sebald'ın imparatorluk çağında ortaya konmuş olan etnografi ve patografinin bütünleyici özelliklerini görmede yetersiz kaldığına dikkat çeker. Bu sebepten, Sebald'ın bu iki disiplin arasında karşıtlık yaratması paylaşılan ideolojik anlayış çerçevesinde anlam karmaşası yaratmaktadır. Anne Fuch bunu "Etnografi, etnik gruplararası ve kültürlerarası farklılıkları Batı merkezli bir bakış açısından gruplamayı ve tartışmalı olarak control etmeyi amaçlarken; patografi ise, psikiyatrik analizlerin bir alt dalı olarak bireylerin olağandışı davranışları gruplar ve kontrol eder." şeklinde açıklar.[433] Bakış açısındaki eksiklikler bir yana, Sebald'ın ortaya çıkarmayı amaçladığı görüş "yıkım" gibi sabit bir ama "zaman" gibi lineer olmayan

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[432] *Ibid*., p.345

[433] Fuchs, 2007, p.119

parametrelerin etrafında oluşturulmuş bir bütün bakış açısıdır ve bu Samuel Todd Presner'in iddia ettiği üzere, yıkımın bütünselliğini bir çok perspektifin çoğulluk ve eş zamanlılığı üzerinden inceleyen sinoptik bir bakış açısıdır.[434] Mark R. McCulloh'un izinden giden Paul Sheehan da "tarihin, insanlar, olaylar ve hikayelerin geri dönüştürülemez olma durumlarından kaynaklanan mutlak bir kaybı belirten sürekli bir tüketme biçimi" olduğunu söylemekle birlikte, Sebald'ın "tarihsel metafizik" yaratımında materialist izleri dönüştürmekten kaçınmadığını ve bu sayede düzensizlik modellerini ortaya çıkardığını iddia eder.[435] Bu sinoptik bakış açısına sahip tarihsel metafizik içinde muhtemlen en iyi örnek, Jean Amery'nin hatıralarının bağlamının yeniden yorumlanmasıdır, ki bu da Presner'in açıklamasıyla Amery'nin hatıralarının Sebald'ın elinde Freud anlayışına göre katmanlanmasıdır. Başka bir şekilde söylenecek olursa, Sebald, Amery'nin 1967'deki hatıralarını, 1943'tekilerle – kendi kurmaca çocukluk hatıraları ve Amery'nin işkence gördüğü zamankiler – katmanlar ve bunları ilgi çekici bir biçimde geç 1990'lar perspektifiyle sunarak, farklı dönemlerdeki hatıraları birbiriyle kaynaştırmaktadır.[436] Benzer bir yaklaşımla, Nazi toplama kampları ile işçiler için kurulmuş pilot şehirler ile ilişkilendirerek anlatır. Böylelikle, Jacques Austerlitz'in kamptan sayfalar önce bahsettiği ve o anda anlamsız görünen ondokuzuncu yüzyıl model kampları "aile benzerlikleri" (family resemblances) açısından alakalı hale gelir. Austerlitz Verschönerungsaktion'i şöyle tarifler:

> Naziler Terezin'i Kızıl Haç komitesinin ziyareti için hazır hale getirir. Binlerce "weniger ansehnlichen Personen" doğuya ölüme gönderilirken, kalanlara gettonun güzelleştirilmesi görevi

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[434] Presner, 2004, p.356

[435] Paul Sheehan, "A History of Smoke: W.G. Sebald and the Memory of Fire", *Textual Practice*, 26.4 (2012), p.736

[436] Presner, 2004, p.349

> verilmiştir. – gül fidanlarının ekilmesi, konser salonunun ve kahvehanenin düzenlenmesi – Daha da zoru durumdan memnunlarmış gibi davranmalarını şart koşulmuştur.[437]

Bu periskopik anlatım, tıpkı Patricia Morton'un Benjamin'in kavramını yorumlamasındaki gibi, bütün bu yaşamların – sonraki yaşamlarının – birarada bulunduğunu ortaya koyar. Bu sadece sosyal ya da ekonomik bağlamda değil, aynı zamanda birbirinden ayırmanın mümkün olmadığı mimarlık anlamında da geçerlidir. Bu yüzden, mimarlık tarihi – çok katmanlı tarihleri sunmada ana ve yardımcı kaygılar taşıdığı için – bu diskurun tam merkezinde yer alır. Ve bir kez daha bu sayede Sebald'ın modernizmi alışılagelmiş tarihi roman stratejilerini sorgulamış olur.

Ek olarak, Sebald'ın tarih yazımı anlayışı, estetik ve etik meselelerini sorgulaması sebebiyle kendi döneminin post-modern anlayışına – özellikle de savaş sonrası edebiyatına – da karşı çıkar. Manfred Jugensen, Sebald'ın Alman Nazi geçmişiyle ilgilenen fakat sanatsal, kişisel ve ahlaki başarısızlığa uğrayan bir çok yazar ile ilgili hayıflandığını, çünkü ona göre savaş sonrası Alman edebiyatının sadece kendi müşterek, tarihi, temsili ve ahlaki doğruculuğun sebep olduğu patalojik kayba tanık olduğunu söyler.[438] Bu durum, Sebald'ın kurmaca yazınla olan ilişkisini anlamayı sağlar; çünkü kurmaca yazın Sebald'a edebi ifade ve belgelerin kullanılması arasında bir korelasyon sağlayan eş zamanlı bir estetik anlayışı yaratmada yardımcı olur.

Bu arada yazmak kadar okumak da bir gezme ve anlama yöntemidir ve geçmişi paylaşılan zamana dönüştürmede etkisi vardır. Bu sebepten, Sebald'ın kurmaca yazınında, edebiyat tarihçisi kendisini yazarla özdeşleştirmelidir ki yazarın kişisel bilgisini, etik yükümlülüklerini ve estetik olasılıkları yakalayabilsin.

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[437] Verdolini, 2013, p.624

[438] Jugensen, 2009, p.429

Metodolojik olarak, eleştirmen kendisini korelatif anlatımın içindeki kurmaca karakterlerden birine dönüştürür ve kelimelerin metafiziksel hizmet sağlayan hayaletimsi varlıklarını ortaya çıkarır.[439] Böylelikle de tarihçinin otoriter karakterini kırmış olur. Burada, Sebald aynı, gerçek ve kurmaca arasındaki çizgiyi gölgelediği gibi, yazar ve anlatıcı ile tarihçi ve şair arasındaki sınırları da kaldırır, çünkü Sebald, yazarın kendisini başa koyduğu, yargı ve hükümde bulunduğu bir otoriter yazımın herhangi bir formunu kabul edilemez bulur.[440] Fakat bu, edebi bağlamda eleştirel bir yaklaşımı kaldırma anlamına gelmez. Samuel Todd Presner'in R.G. Collingwood'a referansla ortaya koyduğu sav şudur ki tarihi bir romanın yazarı ile bir tarihçinin birbirinden ayrılması tasavvur gücü itibariyle değildir çünkü ikisi de anlam ifade eden bütüncül bir tablo ortaya koymaktadırlar. Ancak, tarihçinin başka bir görevi daha vardır ki, o da bu tabloyu şeyleri olduğu gibi resmetmek ve olayları hakikatindeki gibi ortaya koymaktır. Bunu yapabilmek için de, Presner'in savından devam ederek, tarihçi belgelere dayanak vermeil ve tarihin kendi zihninde yeniden canlanmasına izin vermelidir. Bunu da "ölüyü geri getirme" metaforundan yola çıkarak yaptığı takdirde de tarihsel bilginin nesnelerinin yeniden canlanabilmesi için bir ortam yaratmış olmaktadır. Presner'e göre tarihçinin arzusu ölüler arasında yaşamak, onlarla konuşmak ve onları davet etmektir. Bu bağlamdaki bir tarihsel yaklaşım ise sonunda tarihsel ve edebi realizmden ve bunların gerçeği sabitleyen etkisinden farklılaşan nekrofilik bir gerçeklik diskuru yaratmış olur.[441]

Bütün bu anlayış çerçevesinde, Sebald'ın yaptığı Austerlitz, anonym anlatıcı, Andre Hilary ve benzeri sesleri biraraya getirip, çoğulluğu yakalamaktır. Ve

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[439] *Ibid*., p.430

[440] De la Durantaye, 2008, p.436

[441] Presner, 2004, p.346

dahası uyguladığı dolaylı anlatım tekniği ile de buy yazar matriksini (authorial matrix) daha da çarpıtmaktadır. Mesela örneklerden birinde,neredeyse iki tam sayfa, Austerlitz'in Hilary'nin tarihsel yaklaşımlarının hatırlanmasına ayrılmış durumdadır. James Chandler, Hilary'nin bu tarih pratiğini iki formun kombinasyonu olarak açıklamaktadır. Birincisi, farklı faktörlerin tek tek incelendiği bir bakış açısı sunan köklü bir şekilde derine inen form (dramatic immersion), ikincisi de tarihçinin bir olayın dışına çıkarak "hiçbir yerden bakmama" durumuyla inceleme biçimini yansıtan panaromik formdur.[442]

Ve böylelikle, Sebald'ın kendi anlatımı içinde yarattığı "seslerin çoğulluğu", Roland Barthes'ın ünlü "yazarın ölümü" (death of the author) kavramıyla doğrudan ilişkilenir hale gelir. Fakat Sebald'ın diğer kitaplarında bu özellik belirgin olsa da, *Austerlitz* özelinde bu ilişki biraz da karmaşıktır; çünkü bu kitapta otobiyografik yansımalar da fazlasıyla vardır. Mesela, kitaptaki anlatıcı 1944'te Almanya'da doğmuş ve "W" ile kısaltılmış bir taşra kasabasında büyümüştür. Wertach'ın baş harfi olarak yorumlanan bu kasaba ayrıca Sebald'ın doğum yeridir. Dahası anlatıcı yirmili yaşlarına kadar bu kasabada yaşadıktan sonra Almanya'yı terk etmiş ve eğitimini sürdürmek için İngiltere'ye yerleşmiştir. Böylelikle, kesin bir periskopik kaymayı engelleyerek, Sebald'ın yansımalarından biri haline gelmektedir. Manfred Jugensen, Sebald'ın kişisel sesinin *Austerlitz*'e dahil edilmesinin tarihsel şahitlik olgusuna katkı olarak görmekte, bu olgunun deneyimi artiküle eden müşterek bir sesin ayrılamaz bir parçası olduğunu iddia etmekte ve tabi bu girişimin adının, Barthes'ın metinlerin "birden fazla olma durumunu" vurgulayan otoriter ve eleştirel "Ben" kavramına ek olarak, tarihsel kurmaca yazına "rastlantısal" ve "omuz üzeri" tanıklık etme olduğunu vurguluyor.[443] Son

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[442] Chandler, 2003, p.258

[443] Jugensen, 2009, p.434

olarak da yazarın sesinin yazına eklenmesinin aslında bunu arşivlediğine ve yazın içinde müzeselleştiğine ve böylelikle de Sebald'ın, kültürel anlatımların "eş-yazarlı" ve "eş-duygusal" (co-authorial and co-sensual) devamlılığını sağladığına vurgu yapılıyor.[444]

Meta üretiminin (commodity production) kültürel mantığından ziyade terkedilmiş objelerin tarihsel ve etik yansımaları ile ilgilenen Sebald, Aydınlanma projesinin bizzat kendisini, savaş sonrası ve güncel Alman edebiyatı çerçevesinde, ancak odağı Almanya'ya çevirmeden eleştirmektedir ve doğrusu Almanya ve vatandaşlarını saldırı unsuruna indirgeyen ve onları Holokost ile ilişkilendiren görüşlere ve sınırlı bakış açılarına karşı çıkan çıkarımlara saygı göstermektedir. Her aşamada ve her ölçekte – sadece ailevi temsillerde değil, bütün toplumsal temsillerde ve dahası bu yaşamlarla ilişkilenen ve yirminci yüzyılın politik buhranlarında yıkılmış ya da tahrip edilmiş bütün mekanlarda – bu hassasiyeti görmek mümkündür.[445] Dahası, George Kauvaros'un hatırlattığı üzere, Sebald obsesif-kompulsif bir anlayışla yarattığı yazında insanların görmeyi başaramadığı ızdıraplara sessiz bir şekilde tanıklık eden hayvanlara da yer verir.[446] Bianca Theisen Sebald'ın bu yaklaşımlarını Lyotard ve Foucault'nun postmodern felsefeleriyle ilişkilendirip

> Sebald, postmodernism tarafından belirlenmiş sınırlar içerisinde yeni parçaları ortaya çıkarmaya çalışır ve bunu yetenek isteyen bir kıvraklıkla yapar. Çünkü onun postmodernizmi, belirli bir şeyi muğlaklaştırma ya da tarihsel benzemezlikler içinde eritmez ya da

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[444] Blackler, 2009, p.380

[445] Hennlich, 2007, p.11

[446] Kouvaros, 2009, p.399

> kaygısız bir üretim simulakrası ile ilişkiye girmez dahası kendisini serbest bir metinsel kendine referans sistemine sınırlandırmaz.[447]

Kendisini postmodernism kalıbından uzak tutarak, ayrıca diğer projeleri gibi, herhangi bir stilin ya da dönemin kesin tanımlarından da uzak tutar ve sadece dışlanmışları temsil edebileceğini bir duruş bulmaya çalışır.

Zaman kavramınının üzerine çıkan yeni bir mekan kavramı ortaya koyan postmodernizmin estetik problemine karşın, Daniel Bell, Fredric Jameson, David Harvey gibi bir çok kritiğin önerdiği gibi, Michel Foucault da, Batı felsefesinin tarih boyunca, mekanı ölü, durağan, diyalektik olmayan ve sabit; zamanın ise tam tersine zenginlik, verimlilik diyalektik ve hayat olarak nitelendirilmesini tartışmaktadır. [448] Mekansal diyalektik düşünüldüğünde Foucault tarafından gerekli görülen bu kayma, ve Benjamin'in diskuruna uzanan zaman kavramı *Austerlitz*'de barizdir.

Benjamin'in tarih modelinde, tarihin kendisi, zamanın içinde asılı olmaktan ziyade, belli bir dönem, belli bir süreç, belli bir bağlam içerisinde konuşlanan bir nesneye dönüşmektedir. Somutlaştırılmış bir "tarihsel süreklilik"ten koparılmaya ihtiyaç duyduğu için de, araştırmacı, geçmişe ait parçaların kendilerini tam anlamıyla şimdinin içinde bulduğu bir eleştirel kümelenme hakkında bilinçli hale gelir.[449] Hepsi, kendi ölüm süreçlerini/şimdinin geçişini kendi içlerinde bulurken – Deleuze'ün anlayışına göre bunlar geçmişin belirli parçaları değil, geçmişin bütünselliğidir[450] – geçmişin hayaletleri, mekansal-zamansal bir çerçevede (spatio-temporal) "şimdi" ile "o zaman" arasındaki

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[447] Theisen, 2004, p.175

[448] Wilson, 2013, p.65

[449] Elcott, 2004, p.203

[450] Wilson, 2013, p.68

çizgiyi bulanıklaştırarak – ilerlemeyen ve lineer olmayan bir sürekliliği vurgulayarak – şimdinin karşısına çıkar, onu avlar. Tarihsel zaman içerisinde izole edilmiş zamanlar yaratan kırılmalar, kendini Sebald'ın pratiğinde geçmişin donmuş anlarının montajı halinde bulur. Bu arada hatırlatmak gerekir ki, bu sadece edebi bir montaj almak zorunda değildir, arşiv ve gezi de montaj olarak davranabilir. Çok katmanlı bir bağlamda, denebilir ki, Salle des pas Perdus gibi dil ile ifade edilemeyen mekanlarda bile zamanın varlığı metin ortamı tarafından kullanılabilir. Mary Griffin Wilson, bu tip geçmiş ve şimdinin mekansal birleştirmelerinin kitap boyunca varolduğundan bahseder çünkü Sebaald – karakterleri vasıtasıyla – zaman kavramının ölçümü ile ilgili ortaya koyduğu değerlendirmede mekansal özelliğini ortaya koyar. Böylelikle, mekansal olarak kurgulanmış olan bu anlatımda, zaman kendi fiziksel boyutundan ayrıştırılmamış, aksine derine inen dikey bir aks haline gelmiş olur.[451] George Kauvaros'un makalesinde bahsedildiği üzere, Eric Sartner bu bağlantıyı "spektral maddecilik" olarak yorumlar ki bu da "yaşanmış bir mekanın içinde hapsedilmiş olan geçmiş acılarının sürekliliğini beşeri tarih kurgusundaki sürekliliğini kayda geçirmede yeterliğe sahip" olan bir olgudur. [452] Mark M. Anderson'un Austerlitz'i değerlendirdiği yazısı bu konudaki en somut örneği sunmaktadır:

> Jacques Austerlitz, 1980'lerde Paris'e vardığı zaman Yahudi babasının neredeyse kırk yıl önce orada bıraktığı izi aramaktadır. Austerlitz sokaklarda yürür, kendi ailesinin geçmişine dalar, 1930 ve 1940'ların travmatik olaylarını yeniden yaşar. Fakat bu gezilerinde, farkeder ki, Paris metro istasyonları ünlü Napoleonik savaşlar olaan Iena, Solferino ve tabiki *kendi* Austerlitz'ini – muhtemelen babasının Alman ordusundan kaçıp güneye giderken trene bindiği yer olan ve ayrıca Fransız ordusunun yüz yıl öncesindeki zaferini işaretleyen – hatırlatmaktadır. Sinir

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[451] *Ibid*., p.66

[452] Kouvaros, 2009, p.396

> çöküntüsünden muzdaripken, metronun labirentimsi geçitlerinde amaçsızca gezindiği ve buraların ölmüş askerlerle, sürgün edilenlerle, zulme uğrayanlarla dolu olduğu halüsinasyonunu görür: "Ordular halinde köprülerden karşı kıyıya akın eden ya da tünellerden bana doğru gelen günahkar ruhları gördüm, gözleri sabit, soğuk ve ölü."[453]

John Wylie tarafından Sebald ile ilişkili bir biçimde tartışılan Derrida'nın "spektral" anlayışı, bu kapsamı daha da genişletmektedir. Derrida'ya göre, hayalsellik (spectrality) hayaletlerin geri dönen halleri ve varlık ile yokluğu, mekan ile zamanı oluşturan bir yapının kabul edildiği bir anlayıştır. Bu durulmayan süreç geliş ile başlar, durmamacasına devam eder, ve böylelikle hiçbirzaman hiçbir yere ulaşamaz.[454] Mekan ve mimarlık tarihi yazımı açısından ise en önemli soru bu mekanları görebilmeye nasıl başlanacağıdır. Cevap, paradoksal fenomende; görülebilir ile görülemez arasında, gözlemleyici ve gözlenen arasında yatar. John Wylie bu durumu aşağıdaki gibi açıklar:

> Hortlak (spectre) görünürdür; ancak ortada kaybolmuş, ayrılanı yeniden ortaya çıkarırken oluşan bir ayrılma durumu mevcuttur. Aynı şekilde hortlak görünmezdir; fakat izler, görülemeyen bir görme biçimidir ve kendimizi gözlenmiş hatta bazen herhangi bir ortaya çıkma durumu olmadan denetimde hissederiz.[455]

Patricia Morton'ın kavramsallaştırmasıyla örtüşen bir şekilde, bu bakış açıları tarihe genel ya da özelde – mimarlık – bakma açısından bir farkındalık sağlıyor. Böylelikle, söylenebilir ki kendi mekan, hatıra ve öznellik ilişkilerinin uzun vadeli meditasyonu/derinlemesine düşünülmesi açısından, Sebald'ın yazını bir tür mekan metafiziği olarak adlandırılabilir. Bu durum, John Wylie'nin hatırlattığı üzere, halihazırda zaten yeni bir tarih yazımı olarak adlandırılmıştır.

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[453] Anderson, 2003, pp.120-121

[454] Wylie, 2007, p.171

[455] *Ibid*., p.172

Austerlitz örneğinde, kolayca görülebileceği üzere, kişi, yer, gezi, hatırlama biçimlerinin coğrafyalarının nasıl yazılabileceğine dair yeni bir model önerilmektedir.[456] Bu coğrafyalar, bütün bu bahsedilen diskurların kesişiminde, bahsedildiği üzere spektraldir. Çünkü kaygıları, birinci derecede ve en doğrudan haliyle üretimsel olarak, mekanların ve bireylerin yerinden edilmesi ile ilgilidir. Başka bir deyişle, bu kaygı, önkoşulu olan "yerinden etme" ile bir arada varolan "mekan" ile ilgilidir. Çünkü spektral sadece mekanı ve bireyi hayaletimsi hatıralara taşımak koşulu ile yerinden etmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda da şimdiyi kendi yerinden de etmek üzerine çalışır. John Wylie'nin açıklamasında görülebileceği üzere, spektral, "sürgün, kesişme, ayrılmadan oluşan zamansal ve mekansal olarak karmaşık olan bir çevreyi didikleyen" bir ziyaret olarak varolur.[457] Bu şekilde, "harabe-şeklindeki-Avrupa" (Europe-in-ruins) engellenmemiş ve özgür bir hareket halinde ve tek taraflı birleşmiş bir şekilde ortaya çıkar. Anlatıcı, hayaletimsi bir şekilde İngiltere, Fransa, Almanya, Belçika ve Çek Cumhuriyeti'ne, sınır görevlilerinden, gümrüklerden ya da kontrol noktalarından bahsetmeden süzüldüğü gibi, aynı anda zaman içinde de süzülür. Böylelikle, bu yokluk, John Wiley'nin dikkati çektiği üzere, sadece, Avrupa topraklarını belirleyen dış bir sınırın varlığını vurgulamaya yarar.

Bir diyalektik yaratımının yanı sıra, mimarlık özelinde ayrıca söylenebilir ki, Jacques Austerlitz'in doğrudan bir açıklaması ya da vurgusu olmamasına ragmen, tarih yazımı ve mimarlık tarihi yazımı göz önüne alındığında ortaya çıkardığı gerçeklik; mekanların kendi bireysel tarihlerinin dikey aksı içinde, geriye doğru farklı bağlamlarda tarihlenebileceği gibi, her hangi bir an içinde birbirinden bağımsız gözüken mekanların da aslında belli bir ekonomik, sosyal,

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[456] *Ibid*., p.173

[457] *Ibid*., p.181

ya da kültürel bağlamda birbirleriyle ilişkili hale gelebileceklerini göstermesidir. Örnek vermek gerekirse, Breendonk yapıldığı yüzyıl olan 18. Yüzyılda "askeri mimarlık" (military architecture) bağlamı incelenip nasıl bir değişime mağruz kalıyor incelenebilirken, 21. Yüzyılda "yıkım" bağlamı içinde Theresienstadt gibi farklı bir mekanla Nazi dönemi tarihi açısından da incelenebilir. Böylelikle Patricia Morton'ın Benjamin üzerinden sözünü ettiği "aile benzerlikeri" (family resemblances) kavramı üzerinden, coğrafi ve tarihsel olarak birbirinden uzak ve farklı olan bu mekanları aslında nasıl ilişkilenebildiği de gösterilmiş olmaktadır. Yani mekanların maddeselliği aslında, içinde geçmiş dönemler ve şimdiki zamanın harmanlanmış izleri ileri geri manevralar şeklinde açığa çıkarılmayı bekleyen ve bunu da eleştirel tarihçilerin birden fazla yöntemle yapabilmesine ihtiyaç duyan bir olgular bütününe olanak sağlar.

Sonuç olarak, belirli kavramlarla yoğurulmuş bir şekilde – intiba, imaj, iz, katman, ilişki, konudan sapma ve tasarım – Sebald'ın yazını, düşünümsel/yansıtıcı bir yöntem ortaya koyar. Bu, karakter olarak algısaldır ve böylelikle de "şeylerle birlikte nasıl yaşadığımızı, onları nasıl reddetiğimizi ve bu şeylerin yaşamlarının bizim onlarla işimiz bittikten sonra nasıl devam ettiğini ve nasıl direndiklerini anlamamıza yarayan zengin bir alan meydana getirmiş olur."[458]

[458] Hawkins, 2009, p.161

APPENDIX H: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

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Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : SOKULLU
Adı : SEDA
Bölümü : MİMARLIK TARİHİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : "Word, Image & Architectural Historiography in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001)"

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ■ Doktora ☐

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