Metaphor, metonymy and image schemata in memorial landscapes

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Research of metaphor use in the real world has extended the scope beyond narrowly understood language and into various verbo-visual practices of meaning making.

The aim of this paper is to check to what extent the analytic tools developed within cognitive linguistics, in particular in the explorations of mental imagery in the form of image schemata, metonymy and metaphor can be applied to memorial landscapes. Memorial landscapes are understood as … They are thus a form of verbo-visual communication and could therefore be investigated with the methods already applied to other forms of multimodal communication, e.g. advertising (Forceville), cartoons, face-to-face-communication….

The data for the present study consists of three contemporary memorials of traumatic events: The Memorial Site in Bełżec (dedicated in 2004), The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin (dedicated in 2005), and the 9/11 Memorial in New York City (dedicated in 2011). The socio-cultural and historical context of the three cases selected for analysis differs in several respects. The Memorial Site in Bełżec is placed in situ in the traumatic landscape, the new commemoration was instigated by a Jewish survivor Mr Miles Lerman, whose family was murdered at the site. It was designed by Polish sculptors: Andrzej Sołyga, Marcin Roszczyk and Zdzisław Pidek. According to the memorial website its main goal is ““documenting and commemorating the victims of the German death camp in Bełżec” [belzec.eu]. The memorial in Berlin was first proposed by two Germans: Lea Rosch – a journalist and E. Jäckel – a historian. The design is by Peter Eisenman – an American Jew and it is placed in the centre of the German capital. It is not a traumatic place, i.e. an extermination site, but is linked to the history of the Holocaust by being located in the near Goering’s bunker and the former site of…. On the ground levelled out for the construction of the Capital of the World Germania – a re-imagining of the Berlin by Hitler and his main architects Speer. The area where the memorial is now held a number of palaces by the Berlin industrialists destroyed as belonging to the Jews. The memorial website describes its main goal as > “honouring and remembering the 6 M Jewish victims” [stifftung-denkmal.de]. The 9/11 Memorial is placed in situ on Ground Zero, designed by two designers: Michael Arad – an Israeli architect and Peter Walker – an American landscape architect to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks. The website of the memorial describes it as “a tribute to the past and a place of hope for the future” [911memorial.org].