From Ashes to Architecture: Memorialization at Buchenwald Concentration Camp

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truthfulness is always an issue when it comes to memorialization. The inclusion of the steel pipes in the forest of Buchenwald provide an addition layer of truth. Buchenwald was liberated as a Nazi camp in 1945, but was reopened shortly after and was used by the Soviet Union as a “special camp” for political prisoners. Analyzing the pipes, as well as other smaller memorials show the full history of Buchenwald in memorial form instead of just focusing on its time as a Nazi concentration camp.

The main memorial at Buchenwald Concentration Camp is a large steel plate that is engraved with the nationalities of the known victims of the camp. It is a flat plate that is placed in a large open courtyard. The plate is made with steel which was infused with the ashes of the camps victims. The main steel plate appears to be a modern architectural structure, but with numerous postmodern qualities that make it unique. Following theorists Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian Ott the voice of these post modern qualities are examined and combined with an analysis of the modern structure provide insight into the voice of the architecture of the plate.

Little camp was a sub camp of Buchenwald and was left untouched and overgrown with foliage from 1945 until 1990 when a group of survivors and families of victims petitioned to have the camp cleared and memorialized. Following Sociologist Thomas Gieryn, this section of Buchenwald is analyzed using ideas of space v. place in which space is any location that can become a place when people begin to apply meaning to it.