

METAPHORS OF LOSS AND RESILIENCE: A COGNITIVE-SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE ON LANDSCAPE RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE ERUPTION OF TAJOGAITE VOLCANO IN LA PALMA

JUAN JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ RODRÍGUEZ¹, MARTA SILVERA ROIG²

ABSTRACT

The eruption of Tajogaite in 2021 irreversibly transformed the landscape of La Palma, generating a radically new volcanic territory with significant tourism potential (Gkoliomyti & Tsukamoto, 2021). Since the end of the event, urban planning has prioritized policies aimed at the recovery and reconstruction of pre-eruptive conditions. However, the absence of in-depth, community-oriented studies that inform planning decisions is adversely impacting the post-eruptive lava field landscape. This lack of contextualized knowledge has led to missed opportunities for developing an integrated infrastructure that harmonizes tourism development with the unique characteristics of the volcanic landscape (ICOMOS & UNESCO, 2020; Gkoliomyti & Tsukamoto, 2021). After eruption, La Palma faces not only material reconstruction but also the challenge of recovering intangible heritage, emotional ties, and the fractured narratives of its communities (Pallasmaa, 2025). Our interdisciplinary project, combining cognitive linguistics, semiotics, and architectural research, examines how affected residents conceptualize the volcanic landscape, the loss of homes and land, and the ongoing recovery process (Kövecses, 2020). Through interviews with local inhabitants and analysis of their narratives, we identify recurring conceptual metaphors and image schemas that structure how people talk about the eruption, aid distribution, land use, and identity (Wachowiak *et al.*, 2022). These metaphors—such as the island as a body, the lava as an intruder, or home as rootedness—reveal how trauma, belonging, and perceived injustice shape responses to institutional interventions and spatial proposals (Kövecses, 2020). By mapping these metaphorical structures and embo-

¹ Departamento de Expresión Gráfica y Proyectos Arquitectónicos. ULPGC. Edificio de Arquitectura. Campus de Tafira. Correo electrónico: juan.martinez@ulpgc.es.

² Departamento de Filología Moderna, Traducción e Interpretación. ULPGC. Despacho 116. Edificio Anexo A Humanidades. Correo electrónico: marta.silvera@ulpgc.es.

died experiences, we aim to support more context-sensitive planning decisions. This includes recognizing emotional geographies, the value of informal networks and senior residents' knowledge, and the role of storytelling in preserving memory (ICOMOS & UNESCO, 2020; Gkoliomyti & Tsukamoto, 2021). Our approach offers a transdisciplinary toolkit to better align architectural and touristic strategies with the lived experiences of those most affected.



Fig. 1. Earth moving worksite on Tajogaite lava field

Rather than promoting tourism as a generic opportunity, we argue for practices that integrate memory, emotional reconstruction, and symbolic continuity, fostering a form of slow, participatory, and sustainable tourism more aware of the material and geological value of the lava field as living testimony of Tajogaite eruptive event. Our findings can inform future decisions about interventions on volcanic terrain by involving affected communities more deeply and aligning planning strategies with their lived narratives, needs, and emotional times to the land.

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