The Aura of Place

Study Case Public Cemetery in *Pekanbaru, Riau*

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ABSTRAK*: The word aura, generally, described as something that envelops an object that emits communication and expression. In certain places, the feeling of the presence of this aura was happening. The cemetery is a space requirement where there is a belief that every living human being will return to the ground or die, thus creating a special space for these needs. The presence of this required space brings a strong feeling to the people who saw, the place envelopes and emits some energy that we can describe as an aura. This wrapping element supports the presence of the public cemetery. It was found that the factors that support the formation of aura in a public cemetery are determined by a perceptual process of the swarms in the tombs, arrangements of the physical environment system in place and people's understanding about the cemetery. The equivocal aura presence of public cemetery was formatted by the integrated of the factor.*

Keyword: Aura, Public Cemetery, Elements, Presence, Pekanbaru City

INTRODUCTION

The Cemetery is a space requirement where there is a belief that every living human being will return to the ground or die, thus creating a special space for these needs. Each individual buried is generally provided with a special land plot for the burial area which is managed on an area basis and then becomes the burial place for different groups of individuals. The community refers to this space as ''Public Cemetery, usually abbreviated as TPU *(Tempat Pemakaman Umum)*, is a burial area which is usually controlled by the local government and provided for the general public who needs it (Government Regulation to the use of burial grounds, 1987). Over time, this land is now present side by side with daily activities with the people around the area.

Figure 1 (left): TPU (Public Cemetery) Lokomotif. *Jl. Lokomotif* Pekanbaru Tj. Rhu, Kec. Lima Puluh, *Kota* Pekanbaru, Riau 28151
Figure 2 (right): TPU (Public Cemetery) Rintis. *Jl. Tengku Zainal Abidin, Rintis Kec. Lima Puluh. Kota Pekanbaru, Riau 28155*
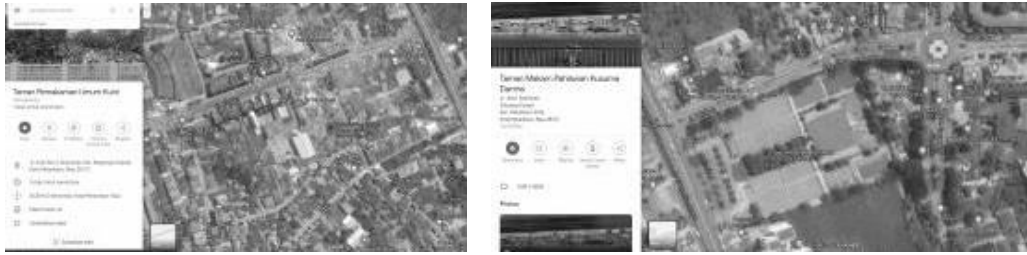Source: Google Map, 2020

Figure 3 (left): Kuini Public Cemetery. *Jl. Kuini No.3, Wonorejo, Kec. Marpoyan Damai, Kota Pekanbaru, Riau*.
Figure 4 (right): Public Cemetery Behind *Kusuma Dharma* Heroes Cemetery, Pekanbaru - Riau. Source: Google Map, 2020

The community understands the Cemetery as a sacred space. The sacred space itself is interpreted as holy and fortunate, providing magical and psychological effects to other parties (Indonesia Dictionary-KBBI, 2019). This magical effect produces the feeling that generates a spatial representation, which is a place for the dead and gives other forms and expressions visible and invisible then can be experienced by people who are nearby.

Figure 5 (left): The scenery of Public Cemetery in Tj. Rhu, Lima Puluh Kota District, Pekanbaru City, Riau
Figure 6 (right):The scenery of Public Cemetery in Rintis, Pekanbaru - Riau.
Source: Google Map, 2020

This feeling then delivers certain experiences in a space called genius loci, which is the Romans' phenomenon, who believed that certain places had a spirit or soul. These spirits or genius loci reflect the uniqueness of a place that differentiates one place from another (Crowe, 1997). The feeling that there is something in the place gives another meaning and impacts the Observer around the place, resulting in a spatial experience. As in the Expression, Genius Loci states "Certain shapes in space, in the landscape before us, seem to offer up certain types of experience. Experiences that suggest some form of presence. What, or who, is there ...? We sense space, and in so doing give sense to space, every time we move from one physical environment to another." (Nesteruk, 2015).

The physical structure or form that appears in the cemetery is generally marked with a sign or symbol. It is known that a place is a sacred place as there are dead people in there, this phenomenon supports the feeling of different energies in a space. referencing Genius Loci "As if the transmutation of form into content were not already troubling enough, we are also asked to envisage the notion of pure form (space or extension) giving birth to an invisible content" (Nesteruk, 2015). The habit of interpreting the symbolism into other meanings has actually become a kind of habit. -Yet this is something we do every day (Nesteruk, 2015).

The energy in the spatial expression arising from the meaning then envelops the physical order of the symbols of the death sign's space, another form of what appears. This can be called the aura of the object.

Aura of Place

According to spiritual beliefs, an aura or human energy field is a coloured emanation said to enclose a human body or any animal or object (Hammer, 2001, p.55) which then radiates a communication and expression. The recipient of the object's emitted expression will cause a behavioural reaction based on the information it receives from the communication of that object. The place is where the dimension is formed by people's relationship with physical settings, individual and group activities, and meanings (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). Then, Aura in the definition of a place means that it can be said as a space that uses a certain order to generate energy for the activities in that space. It emits or radiates strong communication towards a sense of a place that can cause reactions for the user of the space and those who witness the space.

Reading The Aura

There are many ways to read the aura. Interpreting and visualising auras are often considered unscientific because the reading method is angled to mystical visualisation, such as one test involving placing a person in a dark room and asking the psychic to state how much aura he can observe. Only chance results were obtained (Nickell, 2016). Also, readings considered guesswork, such as in one test involving an aura reader standing on one side of a room with an opaque partition separating it from a number of slots that may contain real people or dolls. Aura readers fail to identify the slots containing people, mistakenly stating that they all contain people (Loftin, 1990).

To bring the reading of Aura to a more realistic direction in research on the theme of architectural design, then return to the basis of the discussion about the meaning of aura itself which can be interpreted as an invisible element enveloped by the notion of an object which then gives a certain communication meaning. In order to read it, some ways can be referenced from a study on the interpretation of the aura using the element of smell with the principle of Replacement of the term seeing by eye replaced with seeing by the nose (Mirjafari, 2015). So this research tries to use sensory visual language elements which can be characterised by using the theory of communication in architecture that invites certain perceptions on an object in the case of public cemeteries. How it creates communication from the objects, giving rise to the meaning of another existence that envelopes the place, which can be categorised as the energy or aura that envelops the spatial arrangement in the public cemetery.

1.1 Formulation of the problem

Based on the description of the phenomenon above, this study's problem boundaries are as follows: How could the spatial arrangements of the public cemetery make the existence of the aura?; What is the spatial arrangement factor that supports this phenomenon?; and Can the aura in this spatial arrangement be transformed into tendencies that are considered a forming element of the Aura?

1.2 Research purposes

This research aims to find how a public cemetery creates its stage to create an atmosphere of Aura that can radiate to anyone who sees it and crosses it?

1.3 Benefits of Research

The benefits expected from the research to be carried out are, i.e. for the author, this research conducted to understand the design of a space with a background in architecture. For readers, this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of spatial design through the elemental effects of space found in this research. It can be used as a reference for research in the same discussion in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The presence of the Aura in an order of space gives a strong sense of spatial experience and fills the presence of the space itself. In supporting the notion of spatial experience, this experience's exposure has been summarised in the theory of genius loci, which is the soul of the architecture of a building and an area that encompasses the form of space and time. The historical processes that the buildings and areas go through are part of what constitutes the soul of the place. (Nasution, et.al, 2019). The expression of the idea of genius loci theory leads to the search for elements that influence the aura's formation in a spatial arrangement.

The basis for the phenomenon of the spirit of a place is expressed in Genius Loci's understanding:

> The spirit of the place; the content of a form by (Nesteruk, 2015) that states: Form as performance. Invisible mummery. When space, extension and co-ordinates become a container, the site becomes a stage. Becomes even the anticipated if unseen performance or content due to that stage. The form, the shape of the space, becomes the bearer of a silent message, its unmanifest manifestation. The auto-conjuration of a force we can not see but are able to symbolise; a personification (or prosopopoeia, the evocation the absent, the abstract or the dead).

The mention of this form's performance has been described in the grave design that uses a tombstone. In the Wojowasito General Dictionary (2001), the meaning of a gravestone is the word grafzerk: "a gravestone/tombstone that was laid (on the tomb). This is done to mark the identity and social status of the buried person and a form of respect for the living humans to those who have died.

In making a grave, it cannot be separated from a symbol which states that the area has been planted with a human corpse into the ground. this leads to the semiotic theory of architecture regarding marking
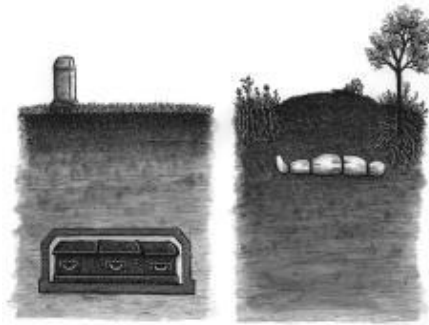
Figure 7 : The feeling of Present & Symbolism. Source: An illustration from
@TheGoodDeath

In the terminology of the founder of semiotics, Charles Peirce(1998) tectonic articulation thus transforms "indexical signs" into "symbolic signs". This process gives degrees of freedom to the designer in the selection of the indexical features that might be heightened and systematized to become elements of a semiological system of signification. (Schumacher, 2012).

The use of symbolism as a message provider for the content to be explained produces an abstraction of understanding about a symbol. This discussion has been discussed in journals regarding the meaning of a symbol that impacts the sanctity of a place by Vasiliy Goryunov (et al., 2015). "The content of a symbol is always perceived as a sort of abstraction 'slipping from comprehension nets' by symbolism supporters." A creative intuition only allows approaching comprehension of symbols, but it can never exhaust its sense. Semantic interpretation of a symbol always takes a symbolic form and for this reason, turns into 'dark infinity'." Dark infinity can be interpreted as something infinite in its meaning. The process of understanding can be created through a process of perception.

Perception is one of the important psychological aspects for humans in responding to various aspects and symptoms around them (Maulida, 2012). According to Toha (2003: 145), the process of forming perceptions is based on several stages, namely:

A) **Stimulus or stimulation**
   The occurrence of perception begins when a person is exposed to a present stimulus from the environment.

B) **Registration**
   In the registration process, a visible symptom is a physical mechanism in the form of sensing and a person's condition to be influential through their sense organs. A person can listen to or view the information sent to him, then list all the information sent to him.

C) **Interpretation**
   Interpretation is a cognitive aspect of perception that is very important, namely the process of giving meaning to the stimulus it receives. The interpretation process depends on the way of understanding, motivation, and a person's personality.

The result of the sense of a space that occurs due to this perceptual process is reinforced by the arrangement of many tombs in public burial places.
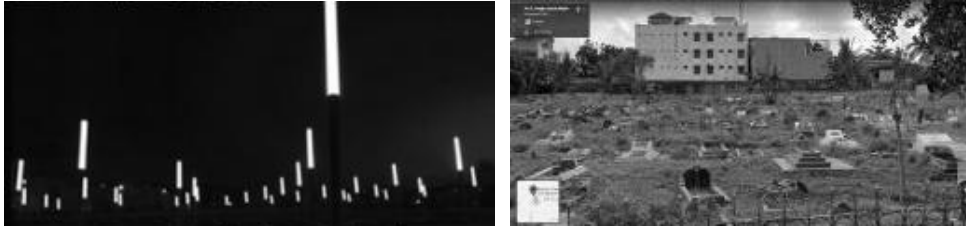
The Swarms of Tombstone

Figure. 8 (left): Swarms in Place Making by Zaha Hadid Architects: Strasbourg Parking
Source: Patrik Schumacher, 2018
Figure 9 (right): The Swarmism of Public Cemetery in Tengku Zainal Abidin St., Rintis,
Lima Puluh District, Pekanbaru City, Riau
Source: Google Street, 2019

In the case of a public cemetery, it is scarce to have an individual setting. This arrangement generally has a certain distance that takes up space for people to pass between gravestones of relatively the same shape and size. Even if there are differences, these differences are not significant, ultimately creating an expression of the association or group that gives its own identity in the Genius Loci (1980) ''Itself the curse or blessing of a space. Space functions as a figure capable of pointing towards another level of meaning, indicating another level of presence - and in this way is transformed into place. The spirit of the place.'' How this is responded to by the user of the space who still has life, looking at 'another space', which he cannot touch and cannot enter if it is not the time to. Give a special feeling of the scene. Due to a large number of arrangements in the same form, this system of orders creates an intimidating effect which gives a stronger sense compared to just the presence of one the object of the tomb.
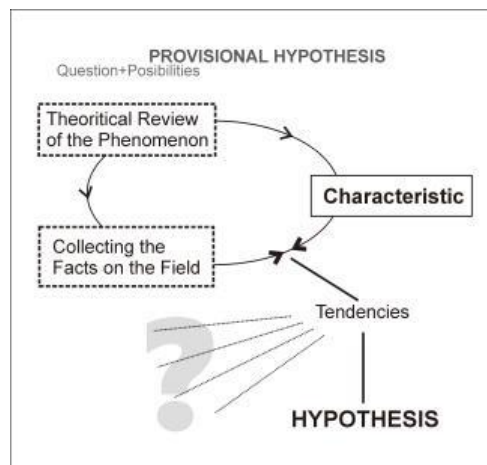
METHODOLOGY

Figure 10 : Research Method Diagram
Source: Personal Document

This research was conducted with two variations, first by performing a theoretical study to find possibilities based on curiosity about how this aura power phenomenon

occurs in that space. It is then compared with field studies and studies to find relevance and then describes the results to provide the hypothesis.

Literature/Theoretical Studies:

From curiosity about the phenomenon of aura arising from the creation of space in a Public cemetery through relevance and attachment between research results and existing theories which are then assembled to form a temporary argument before and while in existence in the field to conduct further studies. based on literature studies, the lesson will summarize and conclude the elements of the object of research such as tombstones and surrounding objects that support the order of the public cemetery.

Qualitative Method:

To confirm the truth about the ideas that have been obtained and at the same time and make the collection of the facts, that will increase the validity of this research. There are two ways that can be done in the field search in this study:

1. Research Object Formulation based on Observation
   a) **Top View of the Existing and Surrounding;** to scanning and identify the overall spatial arrangement of a public cemetery that later it can be used as an explanation for setting order.
   b) **Scenery Photography of Cemetery Elements;** use a photo camera to take a perspective of the atmosphere that takes a specific direction from the public view, This is done to show that the public cemetery's elemental order influences the initial hypothesis about a feeling that pervades the space. The settings to capture the image are using OPPO A39 Camera Phone 13 MP with the same direction and moment or time. It also requires editing the brightness & contrast of night view with CorelDraw 2018 to see the spark of the elements that create the Aura.

2. Interpretation

The researcher will carry out a series of observations of architectural elements in the field, sort the similarities and differences of opinion from each literature review and assess whether these elements have an additional impact on the phenomenon of aura in space. Then describe the results in the illustration which is an image that has been increased in sensitivity with local equalization and posterize settings that represents the composition of the place from the parameters examined in the results of the data obtained.

Site Observation Criteria:

Figure 11 : Determination of the site observation
Source: Personal Document

Categorize as Public Cemetery: There is more than one tomb neatly lined up, open to the public to be seen and entered, Located in the high-density area: Located between high-density city spaces to consider in the future how the atmosphere of togetherness in this space with the community is due to the need for land for burials, Accessible: open to be seen by the general public so that this space becomes relevant for research

Determination of Observation Time

Determining the time of observation is done by observing two different moments and atmosphere

Afternoon: time is taken from 17:20 - 18:10 before sunset. This time is taken with the consideration of the sun's light settings when it is bright which may be more favourable in highlighting the mass objects with the sun's altitude angle of 12° to 1.10°.

Night: time is taken ranges from 19:10 - 20:00 after sunset. This time is taken with the consideration to take a moment of darkness at the beginning of the loss of sunlight with an altitude angle of -13.11 ° to -24.43 ° so that researchers can be more alert in comparing the differences that occur at the time of observation.
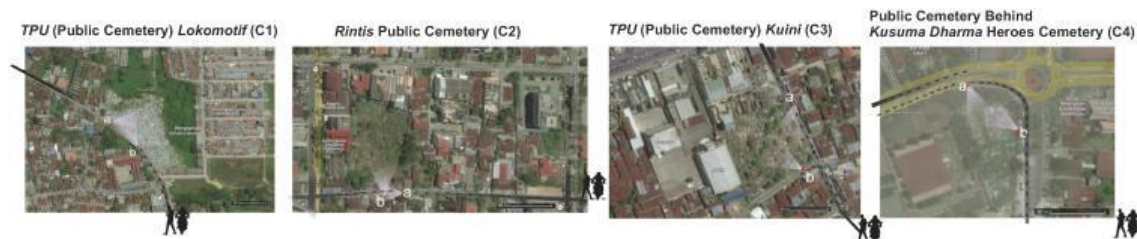
RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Scenario:

Figure 12 : Scenario of Observation at Public Cemetery
Source: Personal Document

The position observation is determined by the Circulation moments, and it follows two opposite directions from the entry of the two sides of the circulation. It is done to know the atmosphere for people passing around the Public cemetery. From each observation location, the graves' direction is directed to the road with the 'face and head' of the tombstones directed to the observation view.

TPU (Public Cemetery) Lokomotif (C1)
At this location, we walk through two different sides with a focused view of the road as curved and a detailed view right at the edge of the site.
Rintis Public Cemetery (C2)
At this location the view is straight in the direction of the circulation, to give a specific view to see the tombs it is necessary to change the direction of view up to 90 degrees
***TPU* (Public Cemetery) *Kuini* (C3)**
At this location, the direction of the view is fixed from the direction of circulation movement towards the site with the formation of turning directions and looking straight from the road.
Public Cemetery Behind *Kusuma Dharma* Heroes Cemetery (C4)
There is a cemetery that is gathered behind the hero's cemetery. The tombs' arrangement is formed in a focused manner. The circulation splits it in between the entranceway, which is the main entrance to the tomb and it can be seen clearly from the main road. Observational positioning is characterised by openings from two different sides of the road.

A) **People understanding about a cemetery (Stimulus Process)**

Figure 13 : Relatable form: Tomb Represent People
Source: Personal Document

The presence of these tombs itself, from those who saw them, was determined by the Culture of People in Understanding Tombs. From the start, it is reflected as a crucial place. The tomb is the final resting place for humankind in which there are bones buried in the ground and marked with a symbol in the form of a stone, which contains information about the identity of the corpse in the form of names and dates. Then later in the case of Public cemetery, this room presents a lot of bodies. Even though it was well buried, the reflection of the corpse itself gave off a sense of an unknown presence.

B) **A Physical Symptom of Existing Elements in Public Cemetery (Registration Process).**
Certain symptoms in space support the sense of presence received through a person's sense organs, which will affect how he sees the information he receives. This can

be seen from the existing Place Conditions, how the physical mechanism factors occur, producing the energy feeling enveloped in the public cemetery.
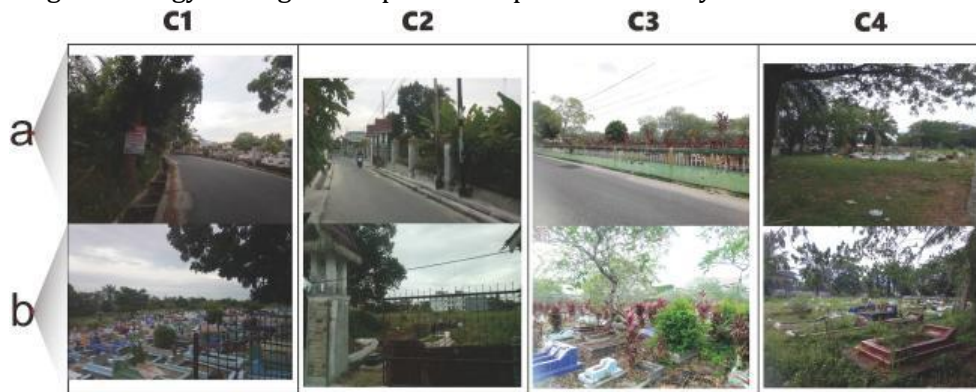

Figure 14 : Atmosphere of Public Cemeteries around 17:20 - 18:10
Source: Personal Document

The view at light hours 17:20 - 18:10 before going dark, the presence of this space is based on how the tomb is exposed to the view from every circulation direction. People will feel the presence of this space clearly when the tomb does not block like in tomb C1, unlike tombs C2, C3, & C4 which are a little bit closed with tall grass (C2), a fence that closes the view (C3), and towering trees (C4). But in some cases, such as location (C2), the presence of a grave drowned by grass was felt by the presence of an entrance gate which gave a prominent view of the nearby tombs. Then in (C3), the presence of the tomb was marked by the presence of a familiar grave plant, namely *Hanjuang Merah (Cordyline fruticosa)* and *Frangipani (Plumeria)* plants that grow right above the tombs, and in case (C4) the presence of the tombs will only be obvious if they are close enough to the site

Figure 15 : Time Range of observations
Source: Personal Document

Then as time changes from light to dark, there is a change of outlook that can produce a different feeling of presence.
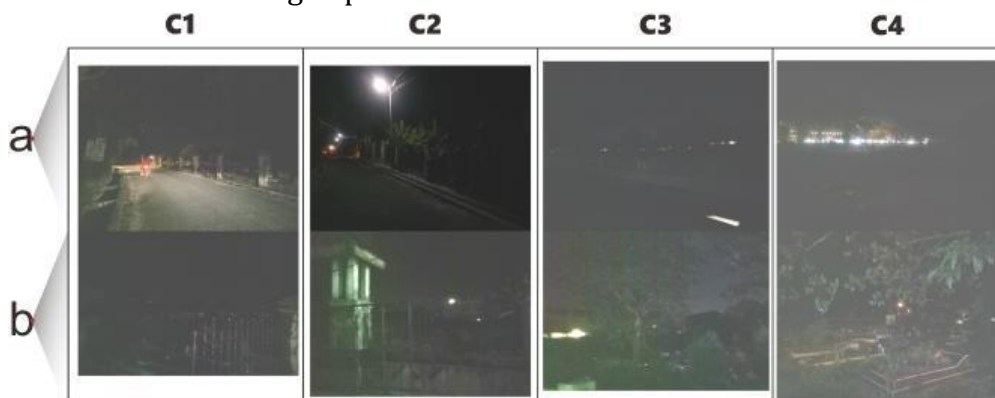

Figure 16 : Atmosphere of Public Cemeteries around 19:10 - 20:00
Source: Personal Document

At night, the grave's location is quite dark and only illuminated by artificial lighting, which in the case of location C1, the lights of passing vehicles dominate this direction. This is the same as in the case of location C3, which is different in location C2, which is brighter only by street light. It differs as in the case of location C4 where surrounding activities dominate the lighting by the site. This lighting gives the presence of the tombs, from each of these lights there is not one single one that offers such a clear presence as a whole so that it is as different as the presence when the light of day the presence becomes dim.
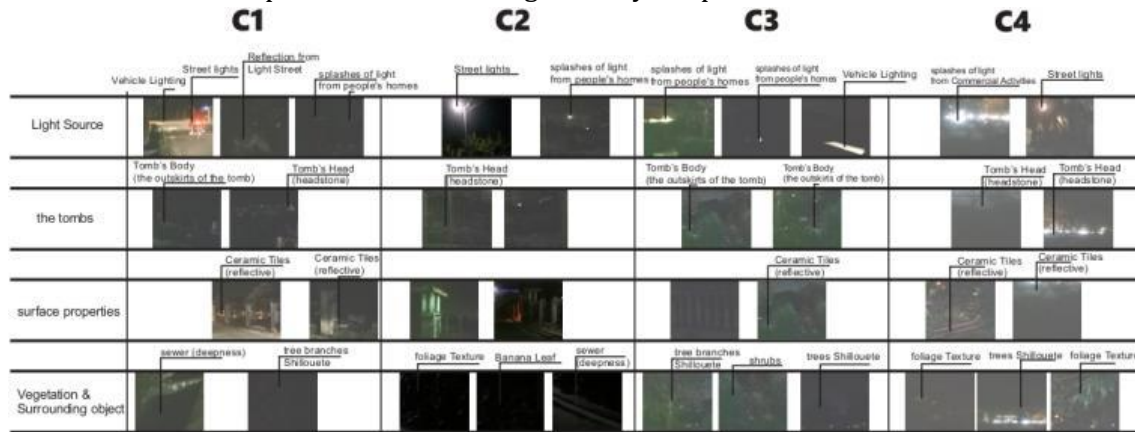

Figure 17 : Elements detail of Public Cemeteries around 19:10 - 20:00
Source: Personal Document

The tombs then capture these vague lights with the tombstone towards the observation, which is a road or circulation space. These tombstones have various surfaces, including ceramic tiles and exposed concrete, which is the ceramic floor itself known to capture then reflect light and exposed concrete which diffuses the light, along with the surface properties of the surrounding objects that support the presence of these tombs. Such as the leaf surface of the trees and the gutters, which then add to the dimension of the vague atmosphere of the tomb.
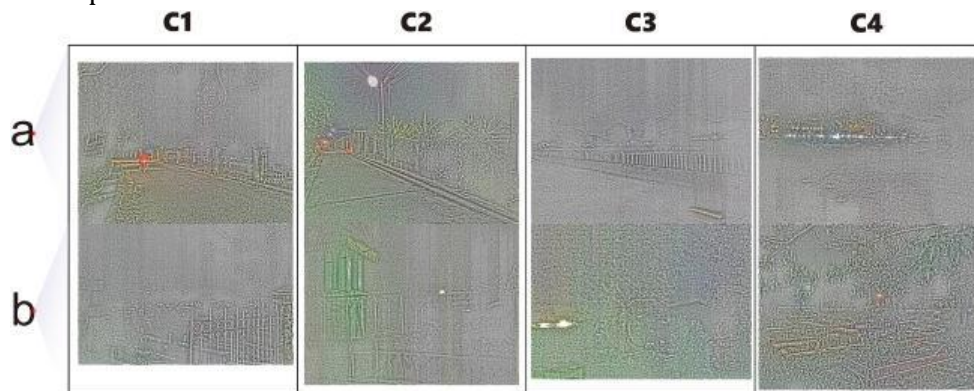

Figure 18 : Local Equalization setting to look for silhouettes of Presence in Public Cemeteries around 19:10 - 20:00
Source: Personal Document

The texture of the presence of the atmosphere in the tomb can be seen as a whole if the presentation of this public cemetery's presence is drawn together (equalisation). From how the recipient of the view sees from these sides, the tomb's presence can be said to be

created from surrounding objects that form a silhouette of a vacuum due to the dark and quiet atmosphere on the site. But it looks as straightforward as it is in front with a little spark of activity and ambient lighting.

Figure 19 :Posterize setting for Highlightment of Element in Public Cemeteries around 19:10 - 20:00
Source: Personal Document

The forms present together in this public cemetery specifically form the same atmosphere from various location cases, at night, they create the obscurity of the minimal lighting. Still, it is evident that this is a sacred place by corpses in below ground during the day.

C) Reaction of the sense an existence Public Cemetery (Interpretation Process)
From the process received by someone who saw and felt the presence of a public cemetery, the interpretation process then worked with how they understood the place. The understanding of a tomb was then supported by reality by what they saw firsthand, which in the previous case, it was found that the vision dims at night. But very clear the presence of a tomb with people who have died in it because it can be seen clearly during the day.

CONCLUSION
Based on studies conducted in this study, the research Problem and Question to the phenomenon of the presence of public cemeteries occurs due to several factors.
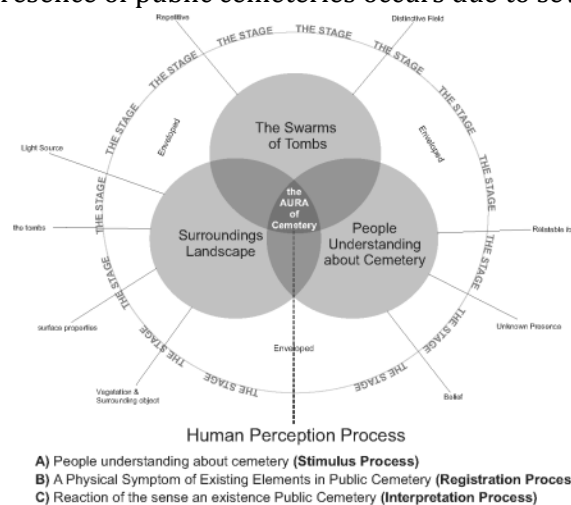

Figure 19 :The factors of aura-making in the Public cemetery
Source: Personal Document

The arrangement of the public cemetery can bring out an aura Due to people's understanding of the symbols of death, this is then reinforced again in the context of the public cemetery, which is a collection of the many symbols to create the association that then in that they create their stage that have unique spatial arrangement. In the study on the field, it was also found that **there are factors that support the presence** by their surrounding environment. The surrounding environment creates that affect the presence of the figures or shapes of these tombs.

Tendencies that are considered a forming element of the Aura are Minimal lighting gives an ambiguity to what is present, providing uncertainty to the public cemetery figures. This factor can be found in every public cemetery, and the reflection also occurs despite the density of the composition. Based on the stage that builds by the public cemeteries, this presence of place then creates people's understanding of themselves, which then integrates with the supporting presence of their equivocal environment by night. From discovering the factors, it can be said that these **factors influence the presence** of a feeling that envelops and radiates that feeling around it producing its own communication and expression.

Regarding the discovery of factors mentioned above, there are **several limitations** of this study, including the study of this aura process, which is still a study through observations of researchers through a series of observing phenomena in the field. Researchers feel this needs further confirmation through the field research involving other people as receivers of this aura. The process of taking the object of study is also very dependent on the facilities owned by the researcher, such as the limited quality of the camera used to take pictures of the atmosphere that can read the existing factors that occur.

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