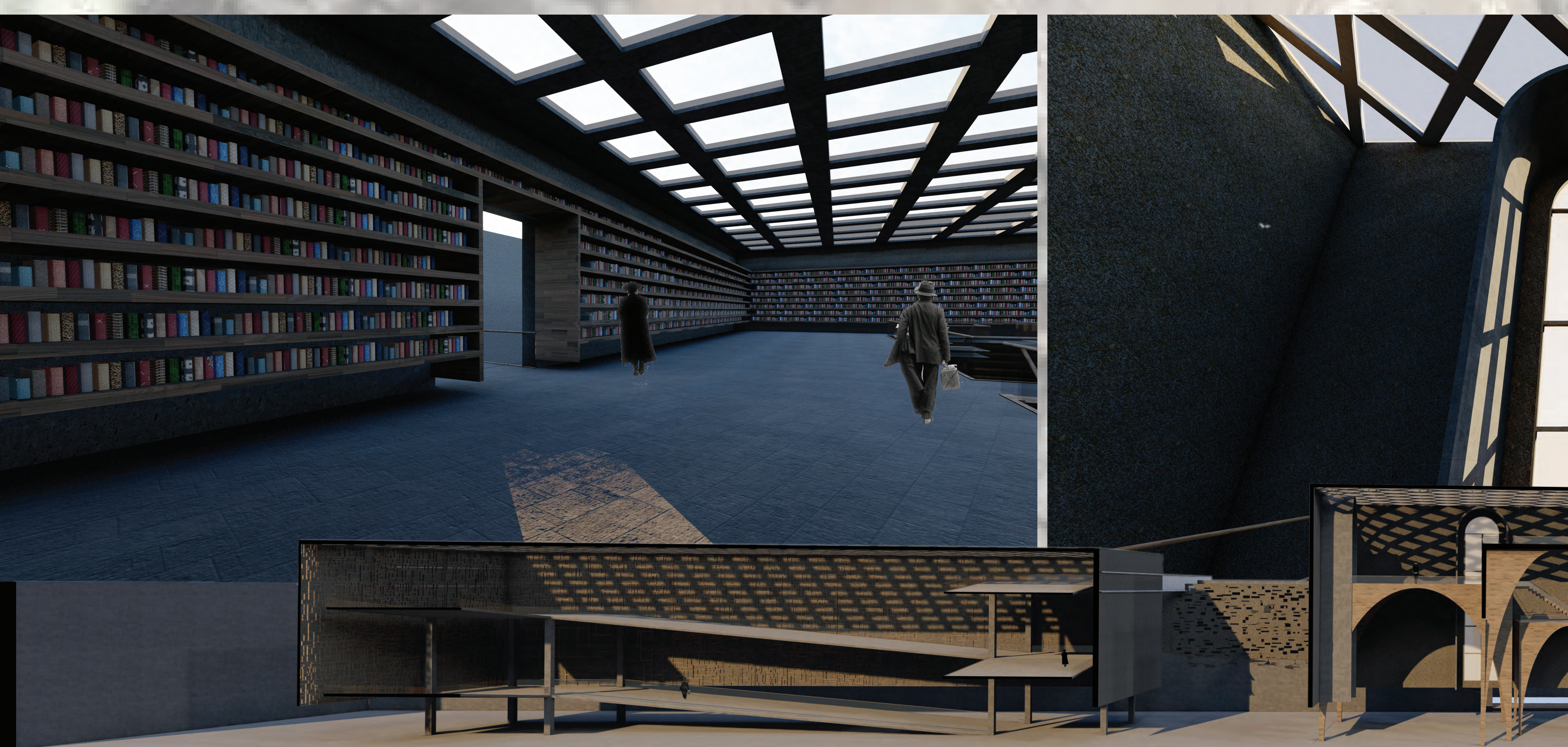


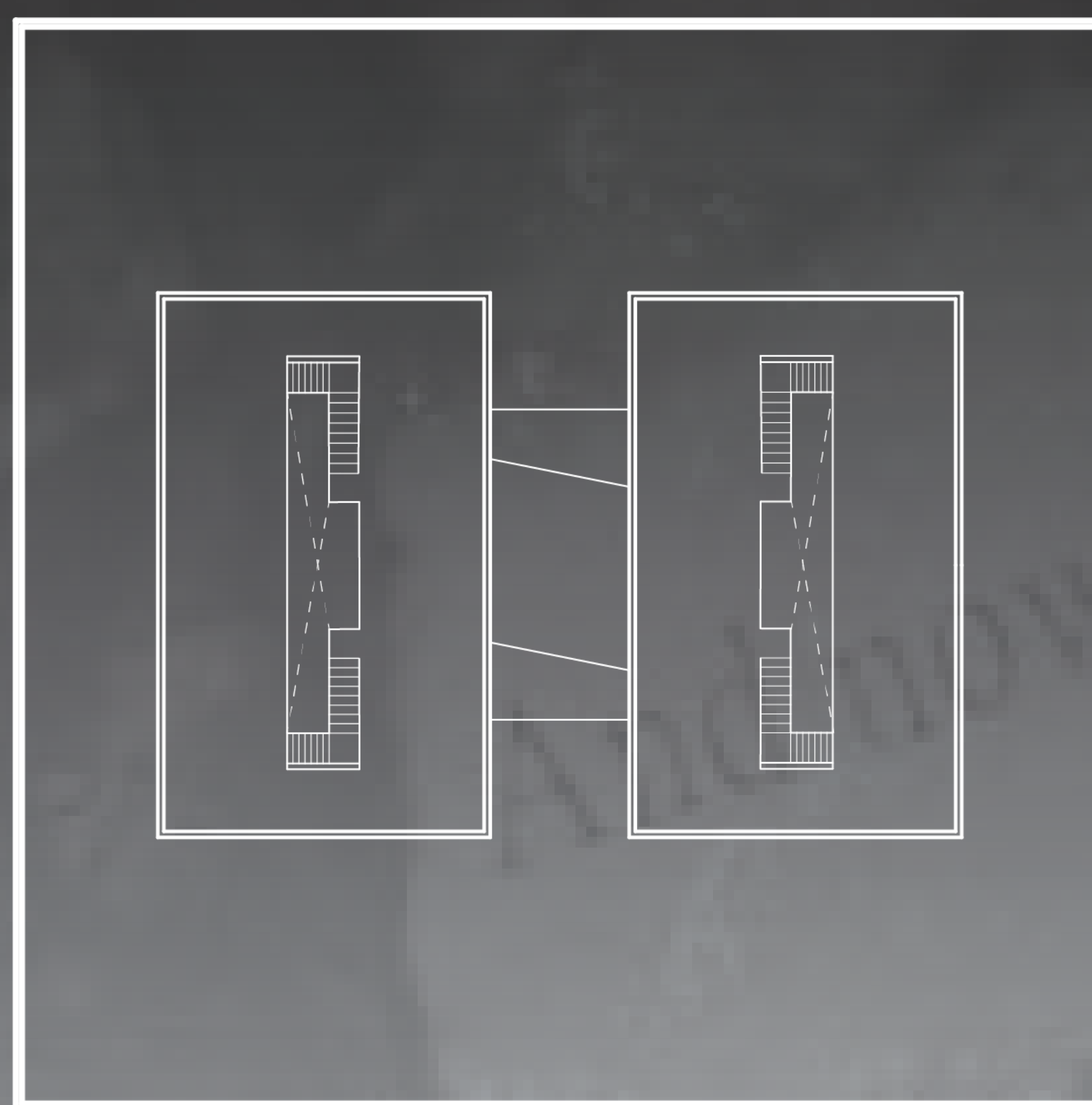
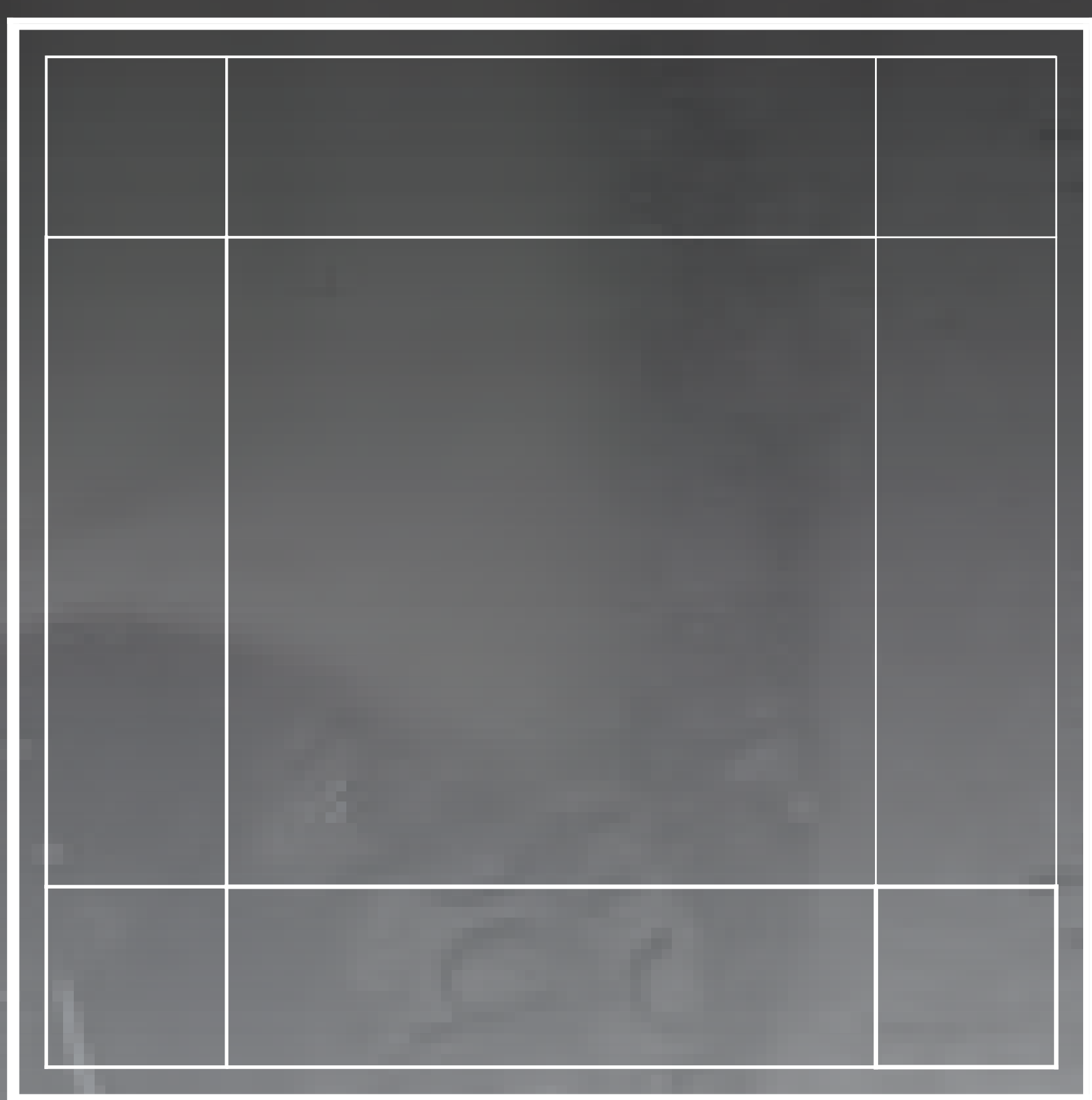
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THE RE-MATERIALIZATION OF LANGUAGE



I CANNOT, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through the thrilling and entralling eloquence of her low musical language, made their way into my heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been unnoticed and unnoted ancient date cannot be doubted. Ligeia! Ligeia! in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone — by Ligeia who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself — what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever she, the wan and emaciated, which my memory falls me not. It is the person of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and, in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the manner in which she entered into my closed study save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. “There is no exquisite beauty,” says Bacon, Lord Verulamius — although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed “exquisite,” and felt that there was much of “strangeness” pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity and to divine! — the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples; and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant, the medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same — the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under — the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke — the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the hue of the softness and the majesty, the fullness of the eyes of Ligeia. or eyes we have no models in the eyes of our own race. They were even more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. As the Turk. The hue of the orbs was transparent in the eyes, was of a nature distinct from any we intrinch our ignorance of so much. What was it — that something more than morning, those divine orbs! they became more than the fact — never, I believe, nor could I end, to remember. And thus how they entirely depart! And (strange, oh strange!) they passed into my spirit, there dwelling, defining that sentiment, or analyze, or water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the changeable, to be found near the land.

by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness — who shall say?) pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.” Length of years, and such a thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me — by the almost magical melody, which she habitually uttered. I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense — such as I have never known in woman. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as the abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I ever found Ligeia at fault? How singularly — how thrillingly, this one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this point, into areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science? I saw not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding; yet I was sufficiently aware



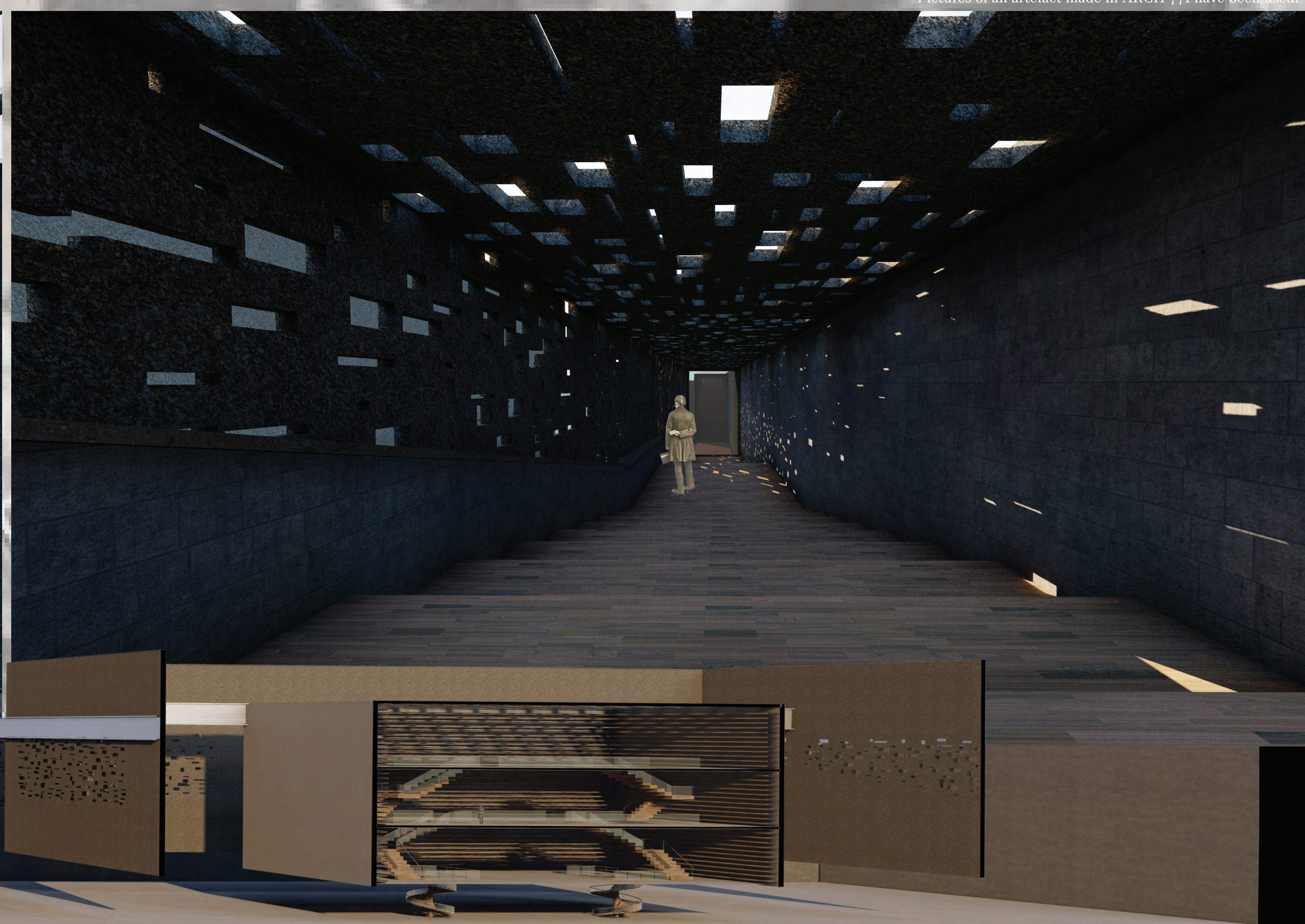
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Michel de Certeau states, “The current industrial mass production of visual imagery tends to alienate vision from emotional involvement and identification and turns imagery into a mesmerizing flow without focus or participation.” Based upon a critique of the expedient exchange of information in our modern culture, this thesis examines how creative language and the act of reading itself might open an interpretive dimension for new pathways that are more and more lost in our current cultural milieu.

Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe’s story *La Ligeia*, which follows a grieving lover through the death and reemergence of his first true love, this rare books library examines how poetic images that emerge from Poe’s story might be transformed into the time and space of architecture. Fragments and spaces, both written and built, aim to conjure unique images within the visitor as an enduring testament to the importance of language itself.

Pictures of an artefact made in ARCH 771 have been used.



ugh much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot now bring these points to mind, because, in truth, the character of my beloved, her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family—I have surely heard her speak. That it is of a remotely Ligeia—that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have never known the paternal name of her of my strength of affection, that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own—a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate and the misty-winged Ashtophet of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine. There is one dear topic, however, on majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanour, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance or of the appearance of an opium-dream—an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the phantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her manner, speaking truly of all the forms and genera of beauty, without some strangeness in the proportion.” Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity, I could not trace home my own perception of “the strange.” I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead—it was faultless—how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so serene and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, “hyacinthine!” I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful and harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly—the magnificent turn of the short upper lip which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin—and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the spirituality, of the Greek—the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream, to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia, in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes, and fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad. Yet it was only at intervals—in moments of intense excitement—that this peculiarity became more manifest, and at such moments was her beauty such as might be seen only in the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth—the beauty of the fabulous Houris of the East, or the most brilliant of black, and, far over them, hanging long lashes of great length. The brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same tint. The “strangeness,” however, which I found in Ligeia, was not in the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the expression. Ah, word of no meaning! In my mind whose vast latitude of mere sound and sense is so much of the spiritual. The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! How have I, as profound as the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved—traced the meaning of her eyes? What was it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining like me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers. There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the surface of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the expression of the eyes of Ligeia. In our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves upon the very verge of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to bring it to mind. How frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia’s eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length the strangest mystery of all! I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to their expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia’s beauty first appeared to me as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I ever even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water, or the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven—(one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by the music of the human voice. I never failed to inspire me with the sentiment;—“And the will therein lieth, which doth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will perpetually in motion, and he that would follow him, he that would be like him, he that would be God himself, he must first be like his will, and he that would be like his will, he must first be like his will.” Subsequent reflection, have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connection between this passage in the English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An intensity in the expression of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vicissitudes of stern passion. The modulation, distinctness and placidity of her very low voice—and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the wild words which she uttered, as if my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern disciples of Emerson, I have felt that she was a woman who had traversed, and successfully, all the wide world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied.