First Essay Final Draft: General Comments

Collectively, you succeeded in identifying details of the structural form that could be used in developing a critique and in reducing the amount of factual recitation contained in your essays. Where much work remains is in developing stronger theses, supported by visual analysis of the structural form and improving the organization and clarity of your writing.

Some specific comments that apply to many, but not all of the essays, and that may help you do better in the future:

1. Strengthen your thesis statements. The introduction can give a preview of all that will come after, but in short form.

2. Divide your paper into paragraphs. Each paragraph should contain one idea. When you move to a new idea, start a new paragraph.

3. Grammar and spelling mistakes make it difficult to take an essay seriously.

4. Organization is important even in a short essay. Many of your essays read as stream-of-consciousness pieces. This style is ineffective for all but the most gifted writers. Making an outline is a very valuable exercise.

5. Try to avoid the passive voice.

6. You must cite the source of information contained in your essay, and must make clear what parts of your essay come from what sources.

7. You can love a structure and still come to the conclusion that it contains no elements of structural art. We work in this class with a fairly narrow definition of structural art, and, in this essay, what I was asking you was to critique your structure within this framework. A statement like, “the ornamentation on the facade of the building makes the otherwise boring form beautiful, and therefore a work of structural art,” does not address the assignment.