

4.104/Joel Turkel

F Feb 4

**Assignment 2** – *Written Intentions – Selecting a Reading/Writing Place*

Due: M Feb 7 @ 2pm

*“Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new”*

- Henry David Thoreau

*Reading: Colin Rowe “Mathematics of the Ideal Villa”*

This essay, perhaps more than any other single piece written in the last century, has shaped the way architects and designers view and critique the space we design and inhabit.

Rowe was the first historian and critic to outline a fundamental method for seeing, understanding, and judging space based on spatial principles rather than “style”. He identifies several key points which we will refer to frequently throughout the term.

The TAs and I will ask you to discuss the organization of your future projects this semester in the terms expressed in this essay. You may recognize many of the concepts Rowe discusses from your experiences in 4.101.

*Assignment:*

Select a place, neither in your living quarters, (nor in someone else’s), in which to read this essay and write a one page paper. It should be something in the public realm, but not a commercial environment (i.e. not Starbucks). It should be a place in which you feel you will be comfortable for 1-2 hours. It should offer the degree of privacy necessary to read and write. It can be in a living group common area, a library, the student center, etc.

Once you have found this place, read the essay, then:

Critique the place you chose to read. Write about both the positive attributes of the place you chose, and on what is negative about it.

Consider the following topics for each:

Why did you choose that place; what drew you to it?

What is the nature of the light? The space? The room? The privacy?

What are the materials? Are you comfortable?

Is it an exposed place? Is it enclosed?

What are the views? What can you see? What can you hear?

How well does it facilitate what you are doing?

Please answer in architectural/spatial terms, with particular reference to what you are doing there, and the positive and negative impact on *your* task (i.e reading and writing). Discuss dimension, space, light, material, spatial zones, etc.

Please post your assignments by Monday at 2pm AND bring a one-page print-out of both Assignment 1 & 2 to studio on Monday, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>.