4. *From Plaid Grid to Diachronic Space*
   Louis I. Kahn, Adler and DeVore Houses, 1954-55
“The footsteps that stumble on the irregular cobblestones of the Guermantes Way are suddenly the same footsteps that stumbled over the uneven flagstones of the Piazza of San Marco.’ These footsteps are not just a double, or an echo of a past traverse. They evoke another sensation, one which does not take the form of a synchronic linear memory, but becomes a diachronic, nonlinear, and simultaneous experience.”

Diachronic – of or concerned with phenomena, such as linguistic features, as they change through time

“Blanchot’s work is not a coherent, all-encompassing ‘theory,’ since it is a work founded on paradox and impossibility. The thread running through all his writing is the constant engagement with the ‘question of literature,’ a simultaneous enactment and interrogation of the profoundly strange experience of writing. For Blanchot, ‘literature begins at the moment when literature becomes a question.’ “
What is the difference between time in literature and architecture?

“…diachronic time disrupts the traditional synchronic condition of both a linear time of reading and the linear time of the story…unlike literature, architecture is thought to presume a single time: the experience of the building and the conceptualizing of the building are understood as one and the same.”

S. Hambright

Drawing Canonical Ideas in Architecture
“The question for architecture involves eliciting that disruptive moment or diachronic time...can architecture...propose affective moments in which the viewer is suddenly freed of the ultimate movement of time toward death, where one can experience some other kind of time, a more pure state that exists somewhere between the viewing subject and the object itself?”
“...Kahn achieves what could be considered an architectural text in diachronic space. This is brought about by the superposition of classical and modern space”
“...architecture both as a complex object and as the potential for the subject to experience the object as both a real space and an imaginary space...It is this unresolved moment in the Adler and DeVore Houses, which are themselves suspended in real time between the Trenton Bathhouse and the Richards Medical Center, that makes these two houses different from much of Kahn’s other work.”

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“...It is in the context of the denial of axial symmetries and part-to-whole relationships evident in much of Kahn's later work that these differences lie.”
“Kahn uses the particular alignment of the column within its masonry enclosures to differentiate the variegated bays that constitute the plaid grid.”
“This is a self-referencing notation of the disjunction between the section of the roof and that of the plan; in other words, an articulated system in section, which evolves out of an extrusion in plan. There is no sectional displacement..fits within the pragmatic tradition and utilization organization of space in American architecture.”

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What about the bath house makes the point of view of the subject irrelevant?

“The bath house pavilions are neither Greek (conceptualized from a perspectival view) nor Roman (conceptualized from a frontal plane); here the point of view of the subject becomes irrelevant.”
“This disruption of specific points of view in the Trenton Bathhouse’s nine-square plan foregrounds the destabilization that becomes manifest in the plans of the Adler and DeVore Houses.”

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“A first sketch with nine-square and axial symmetry clearly has echoes of the Trenton Bathhouse. Later sketches demonstrate the fracturing of this organization, producing what seems to be the fragmentation of a former nine-square grid.”
“Yet attempts to fit the pavilion units back into a unified organization such as a nine-square are frustrated and elude any stable originary part-to-whole relationship.”
Discuss how these superposition of plans recalls the idea of diachronic time in Blanchot’s reading of Proust?

“The Adler House maintains both of these ideas: the whole as the sum of its parts, and the impossibility of the whole; the whole is made impossible by the different shearings and slippages resulting from the superposition of a modernist plan and a classical nine-square parti.”

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What “traces” do you see in the plans?
What architectural elements could be considered a trace?
What is a ‘trace’ in architecture?

…”which implies a transformation not from a single original state but from several possible ordinary conditions.”

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“The movement in the Adler House’s square units produces a shearing motion and introduces two concepts: the idea of a grain to the space and the idea of time in its process.”

What is the ‘movement’ Eisenman refers to? Where is the ‘movement’ evident?
What is ‘the idea of grain to the space?’

“The square units of the plan themselves have no directionality, their varied motions away from possible points of origin always occur along a horizontal axis.”

“The square columns and their groupings to form rectangles imply a grain and directionality to the implied movement of the pavilion units.”
What is ‘the idea of time in its process?’

“The movement in the Adler House’s square units produces a shearing motion and introduces two concepts: the idea of a grain to the space and the idea of time in its process.”

“The horizontal motion of the units remains discontinuous, as if several dislocations from a seeming origin have occurred over time, even though that origin in itself cannot be fixed.”
“The overall arrangement of the square units comprising the Adler House resembles an organization of pavilion units intermittently sliding off the nine-square grid, yet their asymmetrical placement confirms a modern spatial arrangement. The interior grid of the house reverts to a Beaux-Arts plaid grid, and thereby deceters the nine square grid parti.”
The DeVore House similarly resembles the record of a process that has been frozen at a moment in time; it alludes a possible origin but frustrates any direct reading of such origins.

S. Hambright

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“Like the Adler House, Hejduk’s Texas Houses use a classical nine-square parti as their basis. Alternatively, Hejduk’s Wall Houses and Kahn’s DeVore House focus on the relationship of the pavilion to the wall, which in and of itself is thematized as a didactic element to which the pavilions respond.”

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“…the placement of each of its pavilion units seems to respond to the wall, and the shape of its columns further implies a directionality in relation to the wall.”
“The wall simultaneously differentiates and makes intelligible; it separates but also links…it embodies several seemingly contradictory abstract principles…that questions the common understanding of the dialectical difference between inside and outside.”
“...the only ‘inside’ is that point in the interior of the wall itself. Everywhere else is outside of the wall, outside of its inside, but constantly aware of that moment of inside. A ‘time of inside’ is thereby established in relation to the ‘time of outside.’”
'If the pavilions of the Adler and DeVore Houses functioned as units marking tactical shifts across the physical threshold of a wall or the implied/conceptual threshold of a nine-square grid, then the pavilions of the Richards Medical Center are made to serve a picturesque rather than didactic function.'

"The countermanding pavilion alignments, operating systematically in the Adler and DeVore Houses, become at Richards more graphic, and ultimately expressionistic."

"The legibility of the Richards servant and served spaces marks another shift from the undecidability of the pavilions in the houses.

"Richards is also a pavilion project of servant and served elements extruded into the third dimension."
“His work here represents a split between the **unconscious** theoretical propositions apparent in the work of both Mies and Moretti, and the seemingly **conscious** theoretical reversals articulated in that of Le Corbusier.”