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Yiu, Mimi. Architectural Involutions: Writing, Staging, and Building Space, c. 1435–1650

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the text sound awkward—and/or they can alter Luther’s tone, as when the plural is used to replace what was singular in the original.

Luther’s tone, and his meaning, become yet more changed when inclusive language is applied to the Deity, i.e., when the volume contributors (or editors) take an existing translation and exclude the English equivalents of Luther’s clearly masculine terms for God. This practice frequently involves replacing a masculine pronoun with the word “God,” but it can take a number of other forms as well. For example, although the general editors promise to preserve Luther’s language concerning the Trinity (TAL1, ix–x), his terms are often conspicuously altered. Seemingly confined to *Word and Faith*, this practice multiplies footnotes, makes for awkward reading, and can push Luther in the direction of either Arianism (as when the relation between Father and Son is changed to that between “God” and Son, e.g., TAL2, 365) or Modalism (as when the Father’s action is changed to that of God acting “as Father,” e.g., TAL2, 270). The substance of Luther’s thought obviously precludes such positions, but this new terminology remains problematic. Some may see it as liberating and including; but many others will find it frustrating and even alienating. (What is intended to remove barriers for some often ends up creating barriers for others.)

The results of these two volumes, then, are mixed. Whether or not a particular reader will prefer these books over some previous edition will depend on that reader’s perspective and needs. But everyone can take something from them. *The Roots of Reform* and *Word and Faith* should perhaps not be taken to supersede previous translations, but to provide new perspectives and fresh options.

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Yiu, Mimi.

Architectural Involutions: Writing, Staging, and Building Space, c. 1435–1650. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015. Pp. 320 + 67 ill. ISBN 978-0-8101-2986-3 (hardcover) US\$89.95.

In its examination of how shifting discourses of perspective and spatial design influence performances of subjectivity and interiority, *Architectural*

Involutions traces an inward journey from façades to closets, from physical to psychic space, to expose how the meeting of theatre and architecture helped to construct an early modern sense of interiority. Beginning with England's participation in a critical dialogue that flowered after a full text of Vitruvius's *De architectura* (first century BCE) surfaced in the early fifteenth century by defining the architect as a proto-Cartesian subject who builds inside his head, the book extends the humanist apprehension of the social and psychic impact of building to theatrical practice (which also involves plotting upon a platform), comparing formal and informal spaces of performance in order to theorize theatre as architecture and architecture as theatre. What results is an inventive, nuanced reading of perspective that implicates English architecture in a broader cultural shift toward a performance of subjectivity that unfolds private interior as public façade.

Chapter 1 reviews how Leon Battista Alberti redirects the Vitruvian dialogue with his concept of façade as an aesthetic face that makes a building cohere, and thus signify, on a public stage. If initially, in his *De pictura* (1435), Alberti imagines a subject's attaining a rightful sense of place in the world by sacrificing mobility and freedom to the stereometric cage of single-point perspective, then his later architectural designs gradually abandon this paradigm, adapting to a fluid urban context in an effort to achieve a social interface that turns perspective into theatre. Chapter 2 interprets the transplanting of Alberti's façade into England during the post-Reformation period of Great Rebuilding as a process of architectural involution or inward folding, which replaced a logic of central assembly focused on a great hall with one of dissemination and dispersal, materialized by a network of corridors that value circulation over assembly. Unlike medieval buildings that fortified their exteriors, the early modern home now defends against internal threats to privacy by placing façades along every hallway, an architectural tactic that reaches its logical end with the double-pile layout. Ironically, the emerging nuclear family will thus come to occupy a home without any nucleus. For Yiu, domestic interior materializes psychic interior: in a home organized around a central void, the subject must navigate a growing array of liminal spaces before stepping into social legibility. Since theatre supplies a self-reflexive crucible for this process of self discovery, chapter 3 focuses on perhaps the most famous case of subjective crisis in all early modern drama—that plaguing the hero of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—which locates the heart of hearts, the interior space of inscription surpassing outward

show, in Gertrude's closet. Likening this space to the womb-like receptacle allowing ideals to take material shape, which Plato calls *chora*, Yiu theorizes that, since space resists providing any neutral medium, modern cartography became a contested ground when a more scientific model of space began to emerge, espousing an impersonal, coordinate universe. Chapter 4 consequently widens the scope of this domestic, dramatic *chora* to examine Great Britain as a theatre of aspiring empire via the writings of choreographers who sought to create a coherent nation of disparate regions by inscribing or graphing localities with nuanced depth by blending maps and images with history, anecdote, and folklore to create a unified national identity. In this figural birth of a nation, Yiu argues, Queen Elizabeth's virginal womb serves as the *chora* that produces both British subjectivity and the ideology of empire. Returning to the drama, chapter 5 focuses on Morose, the misanthropic patriarch of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*, who orients himself inward by sealing his townhouse against common noise and turning Turk against his London neighbours. Staging the play's actions almost entirely inside the homes of his characters, Jonson builds an imagined architecture mirroring the intimate Whitefriars theatre—itsself a “private house” located in the London liberties—thereby conceiving a site-specific performance that resonates with local audiences and capitalizes on a reflexive awareness of theatrical space. Lastly, chapter 6 puzzles over Samuel van Hoogstraten's perspective box, an experiment in optical geometry that Yiu engages to press Alberti's philosophy to its logical extreme, arguing that Hoogstraten's indoor theatre, which demands viewing from two peepholes drilled into opposite side panels of the box, forces subjects to suture together opposing views and thereby to perform their already-riven status as internal façade.

Ultimately, *Architectural Involutions* conceives the most distant exteriority or public façade as the most deeply folded inward or private heart of hearts, and, at the same time, imagines the binary itself as a product of pure illusion. The book's focus oscillates between theory and material practice, thereby charting a rather circuitous course that some readers may find frustrating. Although far more interested in the subject of subjectivity than in early modern English architecture per se, part of this book's pleasure inheres in its eclectic array of figures, which range from archival plans and images to the author's private photographs and sketches. Yiu's prose is generally lucid and precise, but the results of her recurrent forays into mixed metaphor and clever wordplay vary from delightful to distracting, depending on whether she is quibbling over

a familiar phrase or introducing a comparatively convoluted theory. While the author's frequent engagements with critical and philosophical thought are admirable, in the end, it is the book's detailed close readings of material structures like prayer closets and castle façades that anchor the theory and thus erect a lasting edifice in the reader's memory palace.

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