

## **Balancing the Accounts: taking from/giving to**

When Simon Morris invited me to make a contribution to *Bibliomania*, a show he is curating that consists of the material manifestation of various artists' and critics' bibliographies, rather than those that sit still on my shelves, I started to think about all the books that I no longer have. As I began to search for the 'missing items' I got quite angry. How many books had I, over the years, handed over to someone else, as an offering of knowledge, as an item borrowable, if only for an un-defined period, to find them not yet returned. I made a mental note to contact those friends I had lost track of to get my books back. I began to get really quite affronted – how dare these people accept these books and forget to return them?

### **Books taken from me**

*Alchemical Symbols.*

Roslyn Deutsch, *Evictions*.

Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*.

David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*.

Hermann Hesse, *Damion*.

Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*.

Edmund Reid, *Understanding Buildings*.

Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*.

Bernard Tschumi, *Questions of Space*.

Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*.

But as I went through my collection panicking about all the books I would now have to replace, a couple of surprises waited me. First, I realised that my sense of 'affront' was not to do with the loss of the books themselves, that would have felt more like anxiety, but rather I believed that these books were not items I had 'given' away of my own free will, but items in my possession that had been 'taken', even stolen, from me against my will. Second, I discovered that in my collection were a number of books, a disturbing number, that I know do not belong to me. I had 'borrowed' these books, but it appears, with no intention of returning them. And certainly, once read, their contents digested and filed neatly away on my bookcase, there was no question that these books were mine. The ideas contained within them had become mine, and so why not the material casing?

### **Books taken by me**

Gustav Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

Judith Barry, *Public Fantasy*, (London: ICA, 1991)

*Lina Bo Bardi*: (Milan: Edizioni Charta/Sao Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P M Bardi, 1994).

*Yves Brunier: Landscape Architect*, (Berlin: Birkhauser, 1996).

Aldo Carotenuto, *Eros and Pathos: Shades of Love and Suffering*, (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1989).

Mercea Eliade, *Sacred and Profane: the Nature of Religion*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1959).

Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986).

MVRDV, (Madrid: El Croquis, 1997).

Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, (London: Routledge, 1988).

Roland Ritter and Bernd Knaller-Vlay (eds.), *Other Spaces: The Affair of the Heterotopia*, (Graz: HAD, 1998).

Susana Torre (ed.), *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977).

*Sol le Witt Drawings 1968-1984*, (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1984).

*Sol le Witt Drawings 1984-1988*, (Bern: Kunsthalle, 1989).

*Radical Hermeneutics*

*Renaissance Gardens*

*Heresies*

Interestingly, I note, with every new visit to the book shelf, that the number of books taken by me grows daily, and far exceeds the number of books taken from me. For someone who argues for feminine exchange and gift economies, I am provoked me to consider my own selfishness with regard for books. But I also find that I cannot release them from their original owners: *Radical Hermeneutics* can never be separated from Graham, I always feel guilty about Mary when I see the somewhat battered of spine of *Heresies*. These books belong to me, they are unquestionably mine, but at the same time, they are on also loan, I fully intend to give them back one day. And despite this state of contradiction, I glad to say my study feels much fuller, of my old friends. And even if some of them are quite pissed off, I know I am also present on other bookcases all other the world.

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