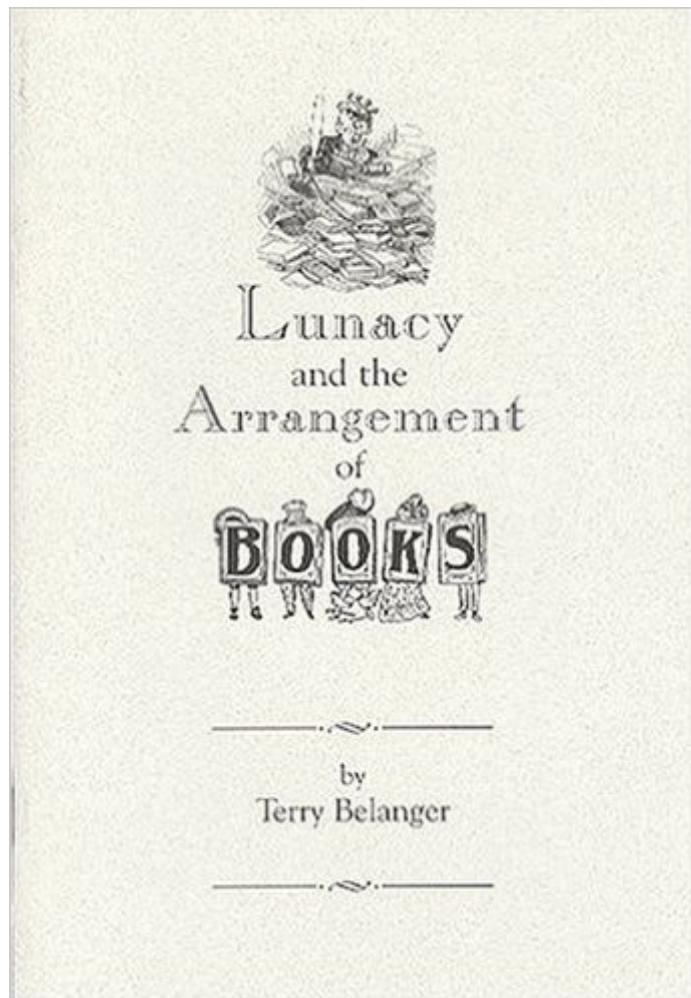


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Lunacy And The Arrangement Of Books



Synopsis

First edition, third printing. A humorous and poignant essay of the idiosyncrasies of book arrangements by collectors over the centuries. Professor Belanger treats the reader to some of the idiotic methods of categorizing and shelving books. One gem from an etiquette book of 1863 decreed that a perfect hostess will see to it that the works of male and female authors be properly segregated on her book shelves. Their proximity, unless they happen to be married, should not be tolerated. Belanger, founder of the Books Arts Press, is the University Professor and Honorary Curator of Special Collections at the University of Virginia.

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-- of the inner madness. That's what bibliomania is, a gentle madness (A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books), and the arrangement of the maniac's collection is the public face of it. Not surprisingly, the most far-out collectors use the most far-out kinds of organizing logic or illogic. One of my co-workers uses the Library of Congress system at home. Others, recorded here, arrange books by size, color, or source from which it was stolen. Alistair Cooke shelved his Americana geographically, from New England at upper left to California at lower right. To the chagrin of people who actually read the things, there are buyers who just want their books to match the rest of the decor. Of course, where such buyers exist, sellers arise to take their money. Then there's that etiquette guide from 1863, which insists that "... works of male and female authors be properly segregated ... unless they happen to be married." The few minutes it

takes to read this pamphlet pay for themselves in amusement, certainly. They also leave the reader with that satisfaction that comes from knowing there are some real odd ones out there, unlike you and me. My library, of course, is organized ... um, never mind.-- wiredweird

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