

Books Do Furnish A Mind, Part I

by Ibn Warraq (March 2015)

“...some covet to have libraries in their houses, as ladies desire to have cupboards of plate in their chambers, only for show; as if they were only to furnish their rooms, and not their minds”.

—Sir William Waller,¹ Meditation V in *Divine Meditations upon Several Occasions: with a Daily Directory*, 1680.

Anyone entering my smallish but not tiny apartment in New York is immediately struck by the sight of seventeen overflowing Ikea Billy bookcases of approximately 3450 books.² All those in happy possession of a private well-stocked library must have encountered the same inevitable question, “Have you read them all?” Occasionally, when the mood takes me, I reply, “Imagine you have a wine cellar. Now what would be the point of having a well-stocked wine cellar where all the bottles are empty?” [more>>>](#)