

Read Between the Monsters

...Monster sized books, that is. In libraries and bookstores alike, look between the multi-hundred paged eye-catchers, and you may find smaller books hiding a much better value.

Maybe if you are looking for something entertaining to fill endless hours of a hum-drum life, you might want to buy books by the pound; but when you need information, the fewer the pages the better.

How many times have you been frustrated with the time necessary to read through huge books only to find that their texts did not live up to their titles, and after having a few points hammered into you over and over again, you still don't know the information you were looking for? So many books seem to be a big waste—of time, paper, money, shelf space, and potential. The existence of speed-reading and skim-reading methods does not excuse unnecessary bulk; they are valuable strategies which would be equally valuable if applied to books of fewer words.

Many publishers want authors to pad their manuscripts with extra words, so that they'll take up more real estate in bookstores (pushing out competition and attracting the buyer's eye), and so that customers will feel they are getting their money's worth. I find it SO annoying when an author spends half of every chapter telling me what they will tell me in the next chapter if I keep reading. Many publishers feel they can charge more for higher page-count books, even if it's all fluff and reiteration on the inside. It would be insulting to the buying public if so many buyers didn't fall for it.

Personally, I think book prices should be based on the value of their content, which has nothing to do with word or page count. In fact, if an author can convey the right information in fewer words, that should actually increase the value of his or her book, because it won't waste the reader's time. I'm attracted to thin books that get to the point and let me get on with using the point. I don't need an author to tell me the same thing six different ways, as if I were a little kid; I can read it once and decide if I want to remember it. I also find it appealing when an author is honest enough to write a small book, rather trying to make it look like everything you could ever want to know is inside one cover.

Next time you are shopping for a book, try not skipping over the slim ones. Maybe they can save you money and time, save the world trees, and encourage the minority of respectable authors.
