Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell

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The ability of a person in making quick decisions based on scanty information is an amazing thing as exemplified Gladwell's writing, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking.* It is an ability involving unconsciously finding patterns in behavior and situations that are based on thin slices of life experiences referred to as "thin-slicing," as well as its useful properties that are mostly disregarded in today’s world (Scott 68). The author argues how in most cases snap judgments may be more accurate or far much better than the decisions that are well-thought out using rhetorical questions and anecdotes. However, despite the widely held view being that a decision that appears well calculated at first seem to be better than that made from instinct, Gladwell is for a central opinion.

*Blink*, the non-fiction novel is the product various interviews, events, as well as studies all that have to do with the effect of our subconscious in making snap decisions. It convinces the audience to the thin-slicing power through supporting examples. In his argument, Gladwell argues that the greatest thing about thin-slicing is that we capable of doing it especially if we thin-slice each other. It is also through our social intelligence being honed through evolution that we are able to read others accurately by relying on the first fleeting impressions. This is the reason why for example Chatroulette and speed dating should be a good idea.

As it is, the overall purpose of Gladwell’s *Blink* is showing his audience of how their intuition is responsible for their experiences of the world. The purpose of writing text is also related to the need of showing the hidden powers of people’s subconscious minds as well as the exploring its importance in our individual decision-making, relationships, and society. The text also helps to illuminate the various ways our subconscious can be manipulated by others such as through influencing our unconscious bias. This is why the author is keen on educating us on the in's and outs of the way the mind works where our subconscious as well as how reasoning and logic are affected intuitively during decision making (Gladwell et al 132). He explores this through the various arguments in the chapters that describe for example how judgment errors are responsible for our actions or decisions made following mind-reading or intuition. Thus, he advocates for the need to slow down our understanding and thinking of how it is easy for factors other than the ones we know influences our subconscious. The audience is therefore urged to retrain its subconscious towards making hasty decisions which are accurate.

In using a neutral diction coupled with explained jargon as well as simple anecdotes, it is right to argue that Gladwell’s target audience is a broad range of readers from the young adults and the older adults. This is evident from his use of a neutral diction and explanations that help to make it easy to get his message across as it becomes more relevant and understood by any averagely learned individual. Similarly, the use of simple anecdotes makes the text suitable for almost anybody as one finds them relevant and applicable to his or her situation. The example of the anecdote about the conflict arising from the Bronx during the investigation of the expensive piece of art’s validity may perhaps illustrate this argument.

Gladwell persuasively shows us that there is even no need of meeting our likely future partners physically as a mere peek at their bedrooms for example through a webcam is enough to have an accurate guess of their main personality traits. This argument is based on cognitive psychology which explains how the powers of intuition on thin-slicing have little to do with the supernatural at all has everything to do with the naturally evolved adaptive unconsciousness. The author argues that our conscious mind is just a glimpse of the cognitive iceberg as our feelings as intuition is merely as a result of the unconscious rapid cognition, fast and frugal information processing. Therefore, thin-slicing helps to harness the powerful adaptive unconsciousness which allows us to make smart decisions that are based on minimal information and deliberation.

The use of Ethos is evident in every chapter which greatly helps in confirming the theory’s credibility and the results of the research done. It is through the employment of ethos that the reader is persuaded to see the validity of the research findings, therefore, being able to trust evidence given for the author’s argument. This is clearly evident in the case where Brian Grazer, a Hollywood producer, uses almost similar language in describing his first encounter with the actor Tom Hanks (Gladwell 45). On the other hand, the use of Pathos is rare but it is evident in the anecdotes. It helps in evoking the readers’ emotions for a better relationship and also making the anecdotes effective as well as understanding the physiological theories better as in the case where Boss is running up the street towards Westchester Avenue because after losing track of their position following the shouting and shooting. Upon the arrival of an ambulances, he sounds distraught and could barely talk as he stood .next to the bullet-ridden body of Diallo and cried (Gladwell 194).

The author refers to John Gottman’s study which shows how possible it is to watch a married couple in a three-minute conversation and one is able to conclude accurately for how long they have been together. He convincingly argues how the first impressions matter most although this may not be the real lesson of the novel, but is quite close. In making our decisions, we normally should stop and think but in the novel, the author argues of how the person's first impression helps in making an accurate judgment as opposed to what decisions, opinions, or judgments that can be made following a lengthy analysis (Scott 68). The author argument on this issue is based on the use of ethos as he postulates his theory through the use of scientific studies and very importantly expert analysis as well as real-life examples. He uses various true-life testimonies and examples to support his argument to prove that the first impression made is usually the most accurate in most cases. This allows his target audience connect his scientific theories to the reality which make it sound more plausible for them agree with him.

Gladwell, therefore, uses interesting anecdotes in the specified reading section as it is with the rest of the text to not only maintain the attention of his audience but also to demonstrate effectively how thin-slicing can be useful in the determination of something that would have taken a lot of time. This is evident in the study involving a young couple hosted at the University of Washington and their interactions recorded. John Gottman, a psychologist, was able to predict with 90 percent accuracy that the couple will remain united after fifteen years through an analysis of their argument involving their pet dog. The use of Logos is another technique employed in Blink mostly applicable with research and tied with the particular claim or opinion the author wants to use in persuading the reader to believe its validity after the group’s guess was an incredibly right 53.8 percent (Gladwell 32).

Blink employs a knowledgeable and mentor-like tone whose reflection is evident through the neutral but mostly positive diction used, addressing the audience directly, and also use of common jargon interposed with others which are complex. Such a tone is used purposely to allow readers trust the sources for credibility and also being a call to action. The author has also used figurative language and symbolism though sparingly mainly because of the especially because the text has a lot of research statistics and data which are more concrete. However, there is some usage of these devices where the author is discussing unimaginable or abstract things to make them easier to understand. For example, he explains the abstract theory of rapid cognition by using scanty information and refers to it as "thin slicing" making the idea simple and palpable to understand and relate to

Through the use of periodic rhetorical questions, the author is able to convince his readers by arguments and transit from the stories in analyzing the thin-slicing phenomenon. For example, in Chapter One, the author poses the rhetorical questions after the couple’s dialogue: "How much do you think can be learned about Sue and Bill's marriage by watching that fifteen-minute videotape? Can we tell if their relationship is healthy or unhealthy?" As much as the questions may not have direct responses, they allow the audience hesitate and think if thin-slicing is enough or not for the job. As a result, the audience is able to follow Gladwell's argument and analysis of Gottman's "love lab". Such use of rhetorical devices in various instances in the specified sections of the text may not necessarily show directly how snap judgments can be very accurate if not even better than the well-thought-out decisions. The rhetorical devices used throughout the reading section, therefore, act as checkpoints for his readers as well as urging them to read on. This is what is achieved for example in one of the rhetorical devices that appears quite early in the text; "Can a marriage really be understood in one sitting?" As the readers may not be in a position to tell, he or she will be propelled to read on to find out the answer.

Therefore, the use of rhetorical devices and anecdotes in the reading sections is effectively used by the author to argue for the usefulness of thin-slicing as opposed to the reliance on the otherwise time-consuming judgmental method. It is the author’s view therefore to show the accuracy of this almost unknown ability to make readers to think deeper about an issue unveils the nature of decision making.

In his concluding arguments, Gladwell argues by a vivid description of how such stereotypes and biases may be used to corrupt our abilities to make accurate snap judgments. For example, he uses the case of women who have previously been excluded from symphony orchestras though they were hired thereafter through blind auditions. The point that he is arguably postulating using Ethos is an assertion that such snap judgments made, when they are free of any bias, may help in the understanding of individuals for who they are “truly”.

**Works Cited**

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