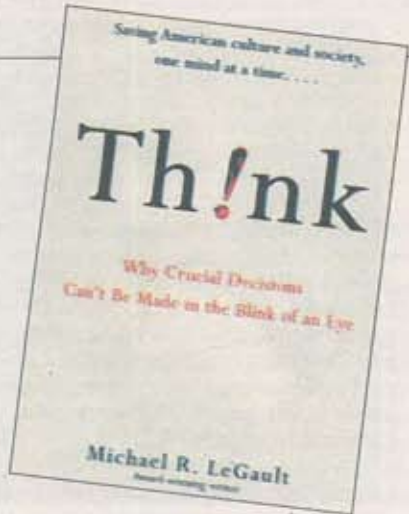


THINK | *An Answer to the Bestselling "Blink"*

Better not *blink*, says Michael R. LeGault — *Blink* being the bestselling appreciation of quick-draw decision-making by Malcolm Gladwell, a former Washington Post staff writer. In his riposte, **Think: Why Crucial Decisions Can't Be Made in the Blink of an Eye** (Threshold, \$24.95), LeGault argues that this country should insist on more critical thinking and painstaking analysis while downplaying the ad lib; the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina would seem to bear him out.

LeGault takes particular issue with a prominent example from *Blink*: the story of the J. Paul Getty Museum's *kouros*, a kind of statue produced widely in ancient Greece. Several experts, including scientists, had

authenticated a *kouros* bought by the museum in 1984, but the legendary Thomas Hoving, former director of New York's Metropolitan Museum, sensed that something was wrong with the piece. His doubts, among others', prompted the Getty to order a thorough investigation, which led to the conclusion that the statue was a brand-new forgery. According to LeGault, what Gladwell overlooked in citing this as a shining example of an intellectual lightning stroke is that when Hoving smelled a fish, he was drawing on decades of experience. "In other words," LeGault writes, "lying behind these 'snap judgments' are educated impressions formed by years of study, thought, and analysis."

LeGault is on more familiar ground in arguing for the value of a liberal education, but even here he points to interesting examples, such as the "scientific hell-raiser" Lynn Margulis, an expert on microorganisms whose work on cell evolution has won her multiple awards. LeGault traces Margulis's brainy iconoclasm to "her exposure to the Great Books curriculum while an undergraduate at the University of Chicago." "The curriculum emphasized the reading of original works to trace and understand how an idea developed," LeGault goes on, "rather than the use of half-truths of textbooks or the language of specialized academic disciplines."

— Dennis Drabelle