

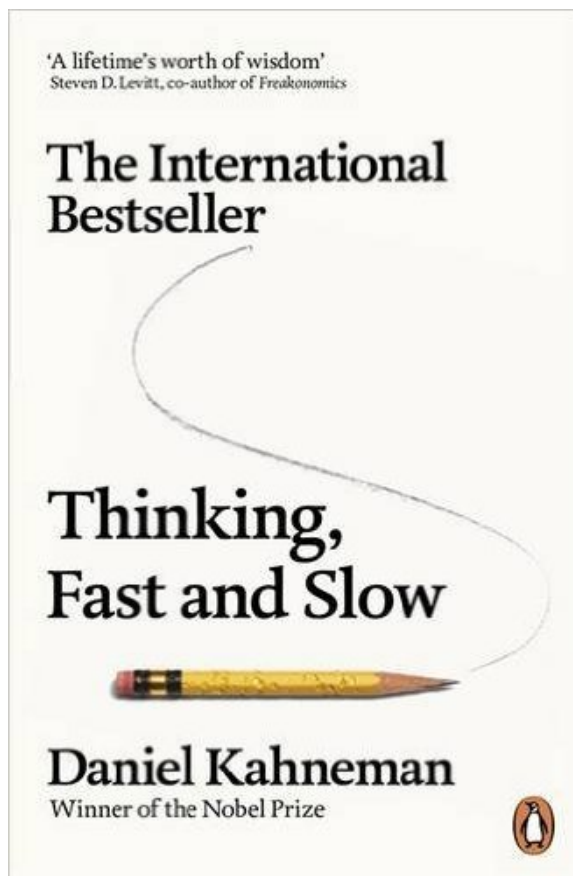
■ Book Review

Thinking, Fast and Slow (by Daniel Kahneman)

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I have found *Thinking, Fast and Slow* extremely interesting. Understanding how and why we make choices is important for everybody. If you are a scientist or aspire to be one in the future, understanding why we accept more readily some experimental results than others, why we are more comfortable with some hypotheses than others, is of fundamental importance, both to guard against bias, and to be able to present our new ideas in a way that will make them more acceptable.

If you are a teacher or aspire to be one in the future, understanding how we can make

ideas easier to remember, or how to trigger rational versus intuitive functioning of the brain of those who listen to us, or those who read what we write, will be very useful.

If you are a student, you will learn when to be on guard, to avoid intuition leading you into wrong answers. You will learn how to write in a way that triggers positive “feelings” in a reader, and why apparently unimportant things like the choice of font may affect how what you write is assessed and graded (without the person doing the grading even noticing...)

Many of these effects are usually subtle, and not too large under “normal” circumstances, but understanding how humans (and other organisms) make decisions is very important when we need to make rational decisions and aim at being objective. The book also discusses to some extent why two contrasting systems for thinking may have evolved.

There is a review of the book from a statistician’s viewpoint at [Patrick Burn’s web site](#), and videos of [a lecture by Daniel Kahneman on the subject of the book](#) available in YouTube.

References

Kahneman, D. (2012). *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books. ISBN: 0141033576.

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Daniel Kahneman is an Israeli-American psychologist, Eugene Higgins Professor of

Psychology, Emeritus, and Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs, Emeritus, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 2002. [His biography at the Nobel Prize Official website](#) sheds light on how a research career leading to a Nobel Prize can be based on a lifetime of exploration of a range of subjects rather than a focused pursuit of known target. This brings us back to Gladwell's *Outliers: The Story of Success* reviewed in this issue by Sari Siipola (Page 41).